Stourbridge
CHRONICLE

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MPs' anger over failure to bring in tougher sentences

KILLER DRIVERS – STILL NO ACTION

Report by Peter Madeley

THE Government has been accused of dragging its feet over bringing in tougher sentences for killer drivers.

Ministers announced in October that drivers who kill in the most serious cases of dangerous and careless driving would face life sentences.

But the legislation has still not been brought in, prompting fury among Black Country MPs.

It follows a campaign by The Chronicle's sister newspaper Express & Star urging the Government to introduce stronger sentences.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin is one of 70 MPs to have written to the Justice Secretary calling for action but the Government have failed to confirm a date for the change.

Ian Austin MP

The Labour MP said: "Residents in Dudley often get in touch with concerns about road safety.

"Just last year there was a fatal accident in Gornal, and people tell me they are worried it will happen again on Dudley's roads.

"I want the minister to do more to provide justice to victims and their families who have been affected by dangerous driving.

"I hoped progress was being made when the Government announced it intended to toughen the sentences for causing death by dangerous driving, but since then, whenever ministers have been questioned about the delay they have said that the changes will be introduced 'as soon as parliamentary time allows'.

"I hoped that pressure from MPs and campaigners would prompt a different and more positive response, but sadly not. How many more families must be made to suffer before the Government takes action?"

A spokesman for the road safety charity Brake says: "More than nine months on from the Government announcement it is clear that no progress has been made. This is simply unacceptable. The Government must act now and deliver justice for road crash victims."

SINGING IN THE RAIN AT FESTIVAL'S SOGGY FINALE

You can't dampen the spirits of Black Country folk determined to have a good time, as Sedgley Ukulele Strummers showed

THE Black Country Festival drew to a close over the weekend – after a month of celebrations, mostly held under blue skies in hot summer weather.

The festival, which began on June 30, reached its finale in Coseley just as torrential rainstorms hit the region.

The Coseley Black Country Day took place on Sunday and hardy local folk were determined to continue the festivities despite soggy weather.

Dave Brownhill, chairman of the festival, said: "The weather had been glorious until the final day when I initially thought the event would be called off because of the rain but the organisers were determined to put on a show and the people came out in force.

In it first weeks the festival faced some competition for attention from the World Cup in Russia and England's good run in the competition.

"But attendances at all events have increased," said Mr Brownhill. "The street food festival in Stourbridge saw 1,400 people turn out on a Friday night. "The message for the Black Country is very positive and that is how we want to keep it."

TRAGEDY

Man dies after being hit by train

A MAN has died after being hit by a train at Sandwell and Dudley Station on Saturday, police have confirmed.

No trains stopped at the rail station in Oldbury on Sunday following the tragedy shortly after 5.30pm. A spokesman for British Transport Police said the man was pronounced dead at the scene and they were not treating his death as suspicious. The man's next of kin have been informed. In a statement, British Transport Police said: "A file will be prepared for the coroner.

West Midlands Railway and Virgin services were affected.

PLANNING

Mast is delayed to consider other sites

CONTROVERSIAL plans to raise a mast beside a road in Netherton have been put on hold.

Dudley Council planners have agreed that work to install a 57ft telecoms mast on Halesowen Road will halt whilst they search for an alternative site. Contractors WHP Telecoms Ltd and MNBL, who represent EE and 3 mobile, agreed to a delay while other options are explored.

HEALTH

More died at hospital than was anticipated

MORE Russells Hall Hospital patients died than were expected to last year.

Officials estimated there should have been 2,331 deaths at Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust or within 30 days of discharge in 2017. However, 2,433 people died – four per cent more than estimated. The figure is within the official 'expected' rating, which allows leeway on estimates.

INSIDE

HAIR'S BABY KATHERINE

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CONTACT US

EDITORIAL:
Tel: 01384 353201/01384 353205
E-mail: dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

SPORTS:
Tel: 01902 319453
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHIC: Tel: 01902 319430
E-mail: picturedesk@expressandstar.co.uk

ADVERTISING: Sue Jones
Tel: 01384 399901
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DISTRIBUTION: Paul Jones
Tel: 01902 319990
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MP faces conduct probe from own party

DUDLEY North Labour MP Ian Austin is embroiled in a row with senior figures inside his own party after a row with a close colleague of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn over anti-Semitism.

Mr Austin has been threatened with disciplinary action after 'heated discussion' on the subject with Ian Lavery in the Commons earlier this month.

Mr Austin has now been sent a letter from Labour's General Secretary Jenny Formby accusing him of 'abusive conduct in Parliament.'

The letter warned: "You should be aware that any future behaviour of a similar nature to the allegation above could result in further disciplinary action, including the possibility of administrative suspension while the matter is investigated."

The allegation against Mr Austin, who is the adopted son of Jewish refugee whose mother and sisters were murdered by the Nazis, is almost identical to the threat of similar action against veteran MP Margaret Hodge, who has admitted calling Mr Corbyn a 'racist' and 'anti-Semitic.'

Reports suggest Mr Austin told Mr Lavery the NEC's decision earlier that day not to adopt the internationally recognised definition of anti-Semitism in its code of conduct was 'disgraceful.'

He is also understood to have said: 'Under this leadership the Labour Party has become a sewer.' But Mr Austin denies being personally abusive.

The letter arrived two days after the bust up.

Mr Austin retorted: "Wouldn't it be great if they dealt with the people responsible for racism as quickly as they dealt with the people who are upset about it? I am angry about anti-Semitism and I am angry that the Labour party can't deal with it adequately."

Earlier this summer 68 British rabbis signed a letter urging Labour 'to listen to the Jewish community', while there have also been protests outside Parliament over Mr Corbyn's perceived failure to deal with anti-Semitism.

Labour's omissions from the recognised definition hinge on references to the state of Israel.

Rehab centre proposed at former care home

THE site of a former care home is to be turned into a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre under new plans.

Former Dudley Council-owned New Bridge House in Coseley is to provide accommodation for men aged 25 and up from as early as January 2019.

Ward councillors recently met the project leaders at charity Expectations UK and warned them they need to win the community over.

An undercover investigation by ITV in 2016 revealed security failings at Waterside House in Newtown, Birmingham, a hostel then run by Expectations UK.

Marc Blanchette, chair of trustees at Expectations UK, said: "Expectations UK have had a challenging two years, which has resulted in the recruitment of new management and board of trustees.

"We also returned a number of properties to our former landlord in order that the new management and board of trustees could restructure the charity.

"New Bridge House will provide direct access accommodation to men from the age of 25 upwards. We do not offer accommodation to individuals with arson convictions or offences of a serious sexual nature.

Refurbishment

"We are hoping to open New Bridge House in January 2019 after a major refurbishment. We discussed the concerns of the local community. As a result, we have agreed to hold two community consultation sessions in Coseley in mid-August to meet with the community and allay any concerns the public may have.

"We want to be part of the local community, providing opportunities for local employment and local businesses, as well as contributing to reducing homelessness."

Councillor Susan Ridney, who met with the charity chiefs, said: "We have no argument on the principle and people do deserve a second chance. It is for them to to actually sell this to the community."

Motorists go low-tech to defy thieves

Neil Horsburgh was targeted when thieves tried to take his Audi S3 but a steering lock stopped them from doing so

CAR and van thefts have almost tripled in the West Midlands in three years with 3,420 stolen in the first six months of this year.

The figures, released by the region's police and crime commissioner, also show which car makes thieves are most likely to target – Audi, followed by BMW, are the most popular makes stolen.

The increase reflects a rise in car crime across the region and come as Chief Constable Dave Thompson says investigations into car crime may take longer -or not happen at all - due to budget cuts.

Commissioner David Jamieson says manufacturers need to do more to step up security. Many thefts are keyless with thieves using technology to pick up signals from a car's fob inside a home to open the vehicle and even start the engine. The cars are then often shipped abroad or sold for parts after being dismantled in 'chop shops'.

Mr Jamieson has met with representatives from BMW, Honda, Ford, Nissan, Audi and Jaguar Land Rover to discuss improving security measures.

IT consultant Neil Horsburgh, 46, from Quinton, experienced his £55,000 Audi A5 being stolen from his driveway in December. Only months later thieves tried to steal his new Audi S3, but were prevented from doing so thanks to a steering wheel lock.

Low-tech deterrents are making a come back with car owners.

£75m wiped off value of the Merry Hill centre

THE value of the Merry Hill centre has been cut by £75 million – with owner Intu announcing overall losses of a staggering £502m in just six months.

The Brierley Hill centre has the second highest rate of empty shops of any of the intu group's centres, with 6.6 per cent vacant – twice as many this time last year.

Intu is the latest big name to take a hit as the UK's retail sector continues to struggle.

The plummeting valuation is a result of the decline in the UK's retail sector, which has seen a string of chains closing hundreds of stores or striking radical bailout deals.

The Intu figures come despite plans to pump £100m into improving Merry Hil with a new cinema and more restaurants in the pipeline.

Around £15m is committed on work at the centre while a giant Next store is about to open on the site of the centre's former Sainsbury's supermarket.

Dudley South MP Mike Wood said: "I speak to intu regularly and I know how important Merry Hill is to them as a company. It is absolutely vital to us, it is one of the largest employers."

Shares at Intu, which took over Merry Hill in 2014, slumped as a result of the loss and the company announcing the departure of its chief executive. The shopping centre company made a £503.4m loss in the six months to June 30, compared to a profit of £122.7m during the same period of last year.

David Fischel, Intu's chief executive, will step down from the board when a successor has been found.

Intu has been hit hard by a decline in the value of its shopping centres, which include the Trafford Centre in Manchester and Lakeside in Essex. Together they are now valued at £9.8 billion. Merry Hill lost eight per cent of its value, down to £864m, while centres in Derby, Watford and Nottingham were down by 11 per cent.

Mr Fischel said: "During a period of weakening sentiment in the retail market, which has impacted shopping centre valuations, Intu has delivered a resilient operational performance in the first half of 2018.

Store helps hospice

MARY Stevens Hospice has been awarded a grant to fund equipment that will help patients affected by learning disabilities or dementia.

Supermarket chain Morrisons have given £3,426 from their foundation to the Stourbridge hospice, allowing them to purchase portable multi-sensory equipment which will allow them to create a sensory room anywhere in the hospice.

The money was presented by Ben Pearce and Helen Nicholls from the Kingswinford Morrisons store.

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Apartments proposed at former site for offices

THIRTY apartments and a bungalow could be built on the site of old office block in Upper Gornal, under new plans.

A planning application has been submitted to Dudley Council for the redevelopment of the site of Solus House and University House, in Jews Lane. The proposals, by Build Vantage, would see six three-bed, 22 two-bed and two one-bed apartments built, as well as a disabled access two-bed bungalow.

Castle and Priory ward Councillor Ken Finch said he welcomed new housing in the area, adding: "Any new development is a good thing, we have got a shortage of housing – as long as there is an affordable element.

"There is a big demand for first-time buyers in the area. People want to get on the housing ladder and these kind of apartments are the perfect opportunity. It's a good little spot to build new homes."

A design and access statement, submitted with the application, said: "The proposal is to build additional units on the site of University and Solus House, Jews Lane, Upper Gornal, Dudley. The two ex-office blocks have now been converted into residential units. As the site is very large there is room for some additional units and a reorganisation of the site to create 30 flats and one disabled access bungalow."

Nurses and Red Cross to rescue

NURSES and volunteers came to the rescue of patients when a water pipe burst in Tividale.

Staff from Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust and members of the British Red Cross dashed to the homes of patients under their community care when they heard about the incident near Burnt Tree on Friday. Ruth Williams, clinical lead for primary care, said: "We were aware our patients in the area were without water due to the burst pipe, so we acted very quickly by sending out our community nurses and Red Cross volunteers. It meant that they were able ensure that those patients were not left dehydrated in the heatwave."

● Flood – page 16

Fun day on field

A COMMUNITY fun day for all the family is being held next Saturday (August 11) at Dormston School playing field in Sedgley from noon to 4pm. Admission is free and funds raised go to White House Cancer Support.

Dudley is looking epic in new video

Video star Heidi Palmer, of Kingswinford

A NEW two-minute film is showcasing Dudley's tourist attractions with a bird's eye view of the borough.

Discover Dudley has launched the film to encourage more people to explore the borough and all it has on offer – including Dudley Zoo and Castle, the Black Country Living Museum and intu Merry Hill.

The film gives a fly-through tour as seen through the eyes of nine-year-old Heidi Palmer and her family, from Kingswinford. While Heidi stars throughout the video, it is narrated by her older sister Ella May Palmer, 12.

It calls in on the Black Country Living Museum, dropping in on the lemurs at Dudley Zoo, spying on dinosaurs at Dudley Museum and watching glassblowing at the Red House Glass Cone.

It also takes in a show at Dudley Town Hall, glides through the tunnels at Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust, stops off Merry Hill and goes hunting for fossils at Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve.

The video ends with young Heidi at Park with a picturesque view over the boating lake.

Councillor Ian Kettle, Dudley Council's cabinet member for tourism, said: "I am immensely proud of the film which has been produced for Discover Dudley.

"When you see everything the borough has to offer wrapped up in this short film, it's quite remarkable.

"We have national nature reserves, internationally important geological sites, award-winning attractions, historic locations and many protected green spaces – all within easy reach."

To see the video visit expressand star.com website.

Violent youth gang went on spree of robberies

A 20-YEAR-OLD who robbed a young man of his mobile phone at knifepoint is starting a two-year sentence at a Young Offenders Institution.

The victim was targeted by Yunus Muflahi while walking through Haden Hill Park in Cradley Heath and was ordered to hand over his phone at knifepoint on August 19, 2016, a judge heard.

Muflahi, of Winwood Road, Rowley Regis, appeared in the dock for sentence with five teenagers from a gang that robbed several young people during an evening of violence two years ago. The group included 17-year-old Brandon Phillips, who killed a man in Netherton three days later. They operated as an intimidating pack on August 8, 2016.

Phillips repeatedly punched a youth at the bus station at Merry Hill shopping centre following an incident at the school several attended. Less than two hours later Phillips was among a 15-strong mob who confronted four boys riding BMX bikes in Old Wharf Road, Stourbridge. The boys were ordered to hand over their phones, and were punched and kicked, the court was told.

Stabbed

Phillips, of Dunhill Road, Rowley Regis, admitted the Merry Hill assault and robbing one of the BMX boys. He was given six months detention at an earlier hearing but is already serving a 10-year sentence for the manslaughter of Simon Johnson, aged 41, who was stabbed at his home in Netherton on August 11.

Danyal Hussain, 18, of Harcourt Road, Old Hill, was convicted of the four BMX boy robberies, as were a 17-year-old from Cradley Heath, a 16-year-old from Oldbury and two 15-year-olds from Quinton and Cradley Heath. Each was given a 12-month youth rehabilitation order with a night-time curfew. The 17-year-old's order will last for two years. Hussain must also do 150 hours unpaid work and pay £200 compensation.

All defendants except Phillips had denied the offences but were convicted after a trial.

The ultimate treehouse for £795,000

Hunters are selling the Wordsley 'eco house', made from local timber, on the rural fringe of the Black Country

WITH five bedrooms, a wine cellar, gym and stunning views from the garden, this unique 'treehouse' could be all yours – for a cool £795,000.

Chestnut Corner, off Braemar Avenue in Wordsley, was built in 2009 – with wooden features throughout, which were all built using wood from woodland behind the property.

Property owner, Kevin Whittingham, who designed it, said: "We built it in the back garden of our previous house, using timber from woodland nearby. We felled all the trees ourselves.

"We were going to build a normal house, but we got a felling licence for the woodland. It is beautiful oak and chestnut so we thought why don't we build a house out of it. It took about nine months.

Hunters Stourbridge is marketing the property, call (01384) 737013.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Fire crew arrived in the nick of time

QUICK-THINKING neighbours saved a house from serious damage during a late night fire in Stourbridge.

A large quantity of rubbish and building materials stacked up close to a house in Hagley Road, Oldswinford caught light at around 11.30pm on Friday. The flames spread to a side entry door. The house was unoccupied at the time and so firefighters from the Brierley Hill station had make a forced entry to check that the inside of the property had not been damaged.

Commander Andrew Papworth said: "The diligence of the local community in raising the alarm ensured that we got there in the nick of time."

Teenagers hurt as car hits wall

THREE young men were taken to hospital after a car careered into a wall shortly before midnight on Saturday.

The 17-year-old driver lost control of the Ford Fiesta in Lordswood Road, Wordsley at around 11.45pm. It slammed into a wall before bouncing back into the road.

The driver and his two passengers – also aged 17 – managed to get out of the damaged vehicle before a fire crew from Brierley Hill arrived. Two had suspected fractures while the third was suffering from shock.

Plea after dog attack kills cygnet

A BABY swan died after a dog attack on a canal path in Coseley. The RSPCA has launched an investigation following the 'disgusting' incident on Thursday when witnesses saw two men laughing as their Akita-type dog caused horrific injuries to a cygnet on Wednesbury Oak Loop Canal Path.

RSPCA Inspector Nayman Dunderdale said: "The dog grabbed hold of the cygnet and dragged it down the path for around 30 metres while they laughed."

Anyone with information is urged to call the RSPCA on 0300 123 8018.

Manufacturer targets opportunities in Japan

A BRIERLEY Hill manufacturer is targeting a major sales drive in Japan.

Alloy Wire International, which supplies more than 60 different high performance alloys to the automotive, aerospace, nuclear, oil and gas sectors, has invested £100,000 into establishing a new sales partner in Tomoe Engineering and launching a dedicated Japanese website. The firm also attended its first Tokyo exhibition, which led to lots of new enquiries.

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COUNTY NEWS

Car insurance premiums fall

CAR insurance premiums continued to fall in the three months to the end of June.

The latest AA British Insurance Premium 'Shoparound' index saw more than £18 wiped off the average quoted premium.

Over 12 months, premiums have dropped by an average of 10.8 per cent to £648.10 – £78.83 cheaper – from an all-time high of £726.93 at the end of the second quarter last year.

For the Central region, taking in the West Midlands, the quarterly fall for premiums was 3.4 per cent to £659.52. Regionally the largest reduction was in London.

Region fares worst for abuse of staff

Nearly 60 per cent of consumers in the West Midlands have witnessed some form of abuse towards retail staff in the last three years, new research has found.

Insurer NFU Mutual said the abuse included customers belittling or patronising staff and cursing and shouting. Physical attacks on employees were also witnessed. The 59 per cent in the West Midlands who have witnessed abuse is the highest percentage in the UK. The average is 52 per cent.

Frank Woods, retail specialist at insurer NFU Mutual, said: "No-one deserves to be spoken to rudely or feel threatened at work."

Third show desire to run a business

More than a third of people in the West Midlands would like to run their own business, a survey shows.

Informi, who provide expert advice and guidance for Britain's Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), conducted the study to see how entrepreneurial different regions around the UK are.

It found 36 per cent in the West Midlands would like to run their own business, 64 per cent of whom were confident it would be a success.

55 per cent of students rue going to university

More than half of Midlands students and graduates regret going to university and say they do not need a degree to do their job, a survey has found.

Barclays Apprenticeships discovered that in the Midlands, 55 per cent of people who left university in the last five years regret their decision and the same percentage – compared with a UK average of 44 – said they did not

Businesses invited to take on Hippodrome

COMPANIES are being invited to take over Dudley Hippodrome following the collapse of a community-led bid to re-open the landmark building as a theatre.

Dudley Council said it was welcoming 'expressions of interest' for the derelict building on Castle Hill. Parties are being encouraged to submit business cases for the building or for the site if they want to knock it down.

Dudley College is understood to be keen on taking over the site as part of its campus in the town but has yet to publicly confirm such an intention.

Council bosses are keen to make new use of the building or the site it stands, since they took back the keys to the once popular venue from the Friends group that aimed to rescue it.

It has even been suggested that a new campaign group may come forward but council chiefs are thought to favour of an alternative use for the site.

The authority earlier this year decided the plan by the Friends was not realistic, despite the group having invested thousands of pounds into the project.

Council leader Patrick Harley said he wanted to draw a line under the Hippodrome issue 'once and for all'.

The 1930s building, which once hosted such stars at Laurel and Hardy and Morecambe and Wise, has not been used since 2009 when it was a bingo hall. It was last used as a theatre in 1964.

Councillor Harley said: "We have bent over backwards to make sure that we consider every option for this building, but we cannot allow this to become another town eyesore."

Killer watched TV as his victim lay dying

Report by John Scott

RICKARDO Wilson professed to love Claire Harris but watched TV rather than make an emergency call for an ambulance as she lay dying on the floor of her Netherton flat.

Wilson was described as an arrogant man with an alarming temper that spelled danger for the 44-year-old mother-of-eight during a near four- year doomed relationship punctuated by violence.

Her friend Stacey Malcolm explained: "It was drink fuelled, love-hate and got aggressively worse over the years."

Now 50-year-old Wilson faces a long jail sentence after being convicted of the manslaughter of Miss Harris who had 86 injuries, 43 of which were to the head and neck.

Stafford Crown Court was told that her body had been on the floor of her rented ground floor flat for up to 24 hours. Wilson told police he had 'no idea' how the injuries had been caused and was acquitted of murder by the jury. He was remanded in custody until September when he will be sentenced.

Killer Rickardo Wilson will be sentenced next month

Mother and grandmother Claire Harris – son found her body

Split

She was 5ft 5ins tall and weighed less than ten stone, he was five inches taller and well built. There was no definitive cause of death but the pathologist said it was likely to have been asphyxia. There was deep internal bruising to her neck,

The couple had split up but Miss Harris had allowed Wilson to remain in her flat in Cinder Bank, Netherton – where he had lived 'on and off' with her since 2015 –and she stayed in Dudley with her sons.

She was lured back to the address for 'dinner and beer' on January 23. In a message he pleaded: 'Don't let me down babe. Ain't seen you for ages."

They drank alcohol and listened to music until a neighbour asked them to turn down the noise. Wilson claimed he was prepared to oblige but alleged Miss Harris refused and this led to an argument.

Another neighbour told police she saw the pair struggling outside the premises with him holding her in a headlock while she shouted he was about to kill her, the court heard. He claimed to have been pulling her away from the man who complained about the loud music.

Mr Jonas Hankin, prosecuting, revealed the defendant admitted grabbing her round the neck and dragging her to the floor after she had allegedly picked up a kitchen knife. Wilson said he let her go when he realised her eyes were closed and she had gone limp.

He watched TV for 'ten minutes' before returning to the prone figure to 'discover' she was not breathing, the court heard.

Panicked

The defendant maintained he panicked, gave her artificial respiration without success but did not call an ambulance or the police and said nothing to her family who had expected her to return that night.

Anxious son Daniel Piddington – one of the eight children she had during an 18 year relationship with Martin Piddington, who died just months before her death – called at the Cinder Bank flat and found her body.

Wilson denied both murder and manslaughter arguing he only used reasonable and normal force to disarm the grandmother-of-six of the knife she was allegedly holding.

Her family said in a statement: "Mom was always there when we needed her most. She was our rock when our dad sadly passed after a battle with cancer in March last year. She was taken from us all too soon."

Family firm lands £11m medals deal with MoD

A FIRM based near Halesowen has landed an £11 million Ministry of Defence contract to make most of Britain's military medals.

Worcestershire Medals Service will supply medals including the George Cross, the Distinguished Service Cross and the Queen's Gallantry Medal after beating off stiff competition to land the bumper contract.

As part of the two year deal the firm will will make every military medal, award and badge, except the Victoria Cross – the highest operational award for gallantry in the presence of the enemy.

Overall the contract is for around 40,000 medals a year.

The Bromsgrove-based family business, which employs more than 50 people, previously worked on the 2012 Diamond Jubilee Medal, the Ebola Medal and the Elizabeth Cross.

The MoD says the contract underlines its push to increases the department's spending with small and medium size businesses.

Gavin Williamson, the Defence Secretary, who is also MP for South Staffordshire, said: "Medals symbolise the bravery, courage and dedication of our service personnel and I am delighted that we have awarded this contract to a family-run business in the West Midlands, supporting local jobs, helping to develop specialist skills and manufacturing, and boosting the local economy."

Worcestershire Medals Service was founded in 1988 and is based in Broad Street, Bromsgrove, and has a factory in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter.

Road sweeper fleet growing

A NEW fleet of road sweepers is taking to the streets as part of Dudley Council's pledge to keep the borough clean and green.

Council bosses gave the go-ahead for six new vehicles to get to work immediately at a meeting last Thursday.

The Scarab M25H machines will replace four outdated sweepers, which will go out of commission, and will result in two additional machines being added to the fleet.

They will enable the council to sweep town and village centres, trunk roads and residential estates on a more regular basis.

A crew of 54 people make up the front line street cleansing team, who will cover approximately 2,300 miles every month using the new fleet.

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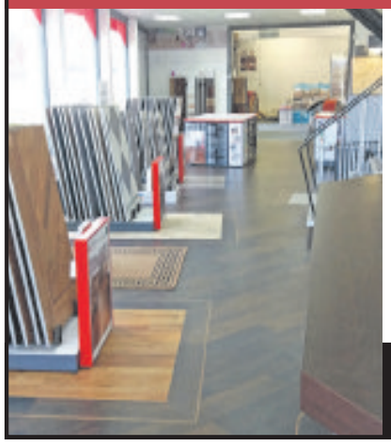

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Wine bar converted for recruit business

THE £580,000 transformation of a former wine bar in Dudley town centre has been completed with a leading borough recruitment firm moving in.

MET Recruitment has bought the building from the council and is making the former Merlin's bar in Wolverhampton Street its new home.

The Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Alan Taylor, had officially declared it open.

Dudley Council has been a major driver in the transformation of this heritage asset, which has stood empty for 20 years. The building has been in a dilapidated condition for many years.

Councillor Ian Kettle, cabinet member for regeneration and enterprise, said: "This is an important site and we are delighted that it is being brought back into use. This refurbishment is part of wider plans to regenerate Wolverhampton Street, a key gateway into the town centre.

"With plenty of other schemes going on in Dudley town centre, including the redevelopment of Cavendish House, it will redefine the town for a generation."

MET Recruitment's previous base was also in Wolverhampton Street . Robin Tong, managing director, said: "We are expanding as a business and had outgrown our former premises, so we were really pleased to go ahead with the expansion."

Planners reject apartments bid

PLANNING chiefs in Dudley have refused an application to turn former offices into eight apartments due to concerns about highway and pedestrian safety.

Dudley Council has refused the plans for the former offices and photographic studio at the junction of Birmingham Street and Bourne Street.

The application had been to create five one-bedroom flats and three two-bedroom flats on two floors of the building.

But it has been refused as it was considered that the parking for the flats would cause problems for existing commercial premises.

A statement concluded the proposed development would be 'detrimental to highway and pedestrian safety'.

Fire station event

A COMMUNITY fun day is being held at Haden Cross Community Fire Station on September 29 will run from 10am to 3pm. It will include the launch of the Sandwell Safer Six campaign against crime.

Time to get buzzy with wildlife garden

Learn how to help with a colourful garden

ASHWOOD Nurseries, near Kingswinford, are putting the focus on conservation and wildlife gardening with fun family activities during August.

The popular nurseries are aiming to show that anyone can make a sanctuary for all kinds of creatures in their own garden.

"Simple changes such as adding a source of fresh water this summer can make the biggest of differences to wildlife around us and a fantastic start to welcoming them in," said an Ashwood spokesperson.

"If every garden played a part, imagine the giant patchwork of habitats that could be created, all the new homes for birds, frogs, toads, hedgehogs, bees, butterflies and other mini-beasts that could be made."

Free events include a Moth Morning on Saturday from 9am to noon. There will be a visit to the wildlife meadow during John's Garden charity open day on August 18 (10-4, £5) and a free bird ringing session from 9 to 11 on August 19.

The centre at Ashwood Lower Lane will be hosting displays by such organisations as Butterfly Conservation, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, RSPB and Wildside Activity Centre.

Other projects as part of the month putting wildlife conservation in the spotlight include 'Let's Get Buzzin', a scheme to create colourful gardens with plants that attract pollination insects; 'Give Wildlife a Home' showcasing insect hotels, hedgehog houses, bee boxes and bird feeders; and the 'Wildflower Hunt' in the nursery garden. Visitors can see images from the Bird Feeder Cam in the garden shop.

Council starting project to build homes for sale

A MULTI-MILLION pound project which will see a Black Country council build homes for private sale is now underway.

Dudley Council is investing in the initiative which will build 59 homes for outright sale, alongside 20 affordable homes on four sites.

Work on the first development, Wenlock Gate, on land beside Wren's Nest Road, Dudley, and within walking distance of the world-renowned Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve, is already under way. It will include eight two-bedroom starter homes, which offer quality and affordable accommodation.

The council has lined up housing partner and local developer Jessup to build the properties on its behalf and is working with estate agent Billingham Taylor to market the properties.

Councillor Laura Taylor, cabinet member for housing, said: "This is the first time in decades we have been in a position to build private homes for outright sale. We know what the demands are in the local housing market and that there is an ever-increasing demand for private and affordable homes.

Control

"Dudley is a place people want to call home. This project puts us in the driving seat and in control of what we are building and where, with the needs of local people in the forefront of our mind.

"In recent years we have built hundreds of new council homes and we are now in a position to broaden our approach and take on the role of developer.

"The homes for private sale will be available at competitive rates but any return on our investment can be ploughed back into future housing provision."

Planning permission for a further 71 homes – 55 private and 16 affordable – has been approved on the sites of the former Mere Centre in Stourbridge, Amblecote House in Brettell Lane, Turner House in Dudley and St Thomas' Network in Dudley. Fifty-five will be available for outright sale and 16 will be affordable.

Service restored at historic church

Friday night's service at St John's in Kates Hill as the church welcomed back a congregation

A LANDMARK Dudley church held its first service in 16 years on Friday after undergoing a major restoration.

St John's in Kates Hill reopened two years ago following a hard-fought campaign to bring it back to its former glory. The first service at the revamped church marked the 178th anniversary of the church first opening.

The Church of St John the Evangelist is an early Victorian church with a grade II listing.

It closed in 2002 due to fears over its condition but the St John's Church Preservation Group led a complete overhaul of the dilapidated church after a major fundraising campaign.

The service was led by Rector of Dudley, Rev Robert Barlow. Music was provided by The Messengers ukulele group. Rev Barlow played guitar during How Great Thou Art and Black Country Gaz accompanied Amazing Grace.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Councillor furious over park mess

A TRAVELLER camp set up on a park in Dudley just as the school summer holidays got under way has been branded a 'disgrace'.

The mess left by the inhabitants of around 14 caravans at Netherton Park in Dudley has been slammed by Labour councillor for Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews Qadar Zada.

And he wants the travellers to foot the bill for the clean up.

Councillor Zada said: "It is an utter disgrace. I would charge them for the clean-up. There was everything from domestic and commercial litter to excrement in the bushes."

Debenhams value hits Sports Direct

SPORTS Direct has blamed an £85 million hit from its stake in revalued Debenhams for dragging full-year profits down by 72.5 per cent.

The sports retailer, which has stores at the Merry Hill centre, Wolverhampton city centre and at Bentley Bridge, Walsall, Cannock, West Bromwich, Kidderminster and Stafford, said its pre-tax profits plunged to £77.5m in the year to April 29.

It was impacted in part by an investment in department store chain Debenhams, having increased its total stake to 29.7 per cent.

Serious message from comedians

BLACK Country comedy group The Fizzogs are helping young people with mental health problems.

Fizzogs Deb Nicholls and Sue Hawkins have designed the project Living on The Edge, which has been funded by the Awards for All Scheme.

They have been working with students from Dudley College to create a workshop which has been delivered around the Black Country. Sue said: "The whole idea is to see how kids aredealing with issues they face in everyday life. It could be personal problems, exam pressures or fear of the future."

Fixed Wheel plans for one-room micropubs

A BLACKHEATH brewery is to open its first micropub in Lye.

Fixed Wheel Brewery hopes to get a licence approved shortly for the former Blacks Vets in High Street, being converted to create the Wheelie Thirsty bar. All of Fixed Wheel's beers have a cycling theme. Owner Scott Povey said it was hoped to be able to open the one-room pub this month and there were already plans for a second micropub in Old Hill High Street.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

What a lot of fuss over university billboard

LAST week, somebody who styled herself as "Dr Helen Dexter of Leicester University" posted an advertisement for Wolverhampton University on social media, with the comment "This image is so offensive I am amazed anyone thought it was appropriate. Please withdraw it immediately."

I looked at it, and then looked at it again. I could not see anything remotely offensive. Admittedly, I couldn't understand what it was about either, just a young girl, presumably a student, talking to a group of children, presumably in Africa. With the slogan "If you want to explore new worlds, start here."

It is a hopeless advert, but then again, roadside billboards seldom give confidence in an academic institution. When was the last time you saw one for Oxford or Cambridge?

But while it seems a rather silly way to promote its courses, I fail to see how anybody could possibly be offended. Thankfully, Dr Helen's fellow travellers were happy to explain.

Now I'm always sceptical about non-medics who preface their name with the title "Dr", particularly on social media. It seems a bit chippy, a bit like listing your O-level grades after your name. But when it comes to self-regard, the people who took offence seem to be on another planet.

"Prof Dr Lisa Ann Richey" explained it was all about "voluntourism" and "neo-colonialism", as well as "visual signage". Now when was the last time anybody who used the word 'signage' had a valid point to make?

Then there was Nicole Andrews, a 33-year-old health and social care lecturer at Newman University in Birmingham. She said: "There's strands of colonialism, patriotism, racism, gender issues." So patriotism is a bad thing now, as well?

Also worth an honourable mention is Dave Hitchcock, a self-styled "historian" who says the "echoes of philanthrocapitalism are Not Good". Philanthrocapitalism. Where do they get these words from? I think, in plain English, what they are trying to say is that a lot of young people who go on these "aid projects" are really after a cheap holiday and a pat on the back, which is actually a valid point.

I have long grown weary of people raising thousands of pounds in sponsorship not to give to charities working in the Third World, but simply to pay for their very expensive trip. Quite what this has to do with colonialism, gender issues or capitalism, though, I'm not sure. Still, on the positive side, at least it's funny seeing one bunch of snowflakes complaining about another bunch of snowflakes.

Remember the time when ' Made in Britain' reigned

Sondos Alqattan – and the problem of employing Filipina maids

Humid? I am reminded of the throwaway line by neighbour Nick (Owen Brenman)

Peter Benchley's definition in his novel, Jaws – a shark is a swimming appetite

Glow of pride that can cost a fortune

TODAY I metaphorically link arms with Comrade Jez on the long march to the sunlit uplands of Brexit. Jeremy Corbyn is a long-standing enemy of the EU for exactly the same reason as his political enemies Boris Johnson and Jacob Rees-Mogg. They do not believe Britain can be properly governed, or reach its full potential, as a one-28th part shareholder in a superstate which is strangled by red tape and ruled by people who think Luxembourg is a real country. This week Mr Corbyn urged the nation to seize one of the first advantages of Brexit – the weak pound – to kick-start our manufacturing industry. Why buy stuff from China when we can make it here?

WELL, it sounds perfect. Unless you are old enough to remember the time when almost every item you bought was marked "Made in Britain"which may have given us a brief glow of pride but cost us a fortune.

IN the drought of 1976, for example, being young and foolish, we followed the Government's advice to soak the garden using water from the washing machine. What no-one told us was that the appliance's water pump depended on a certain level of water pressure. Attaching the machine to a garden hose increased the pressure, demolished the pump and wrecked the "Made in Britain" washing machine. The replacement, also made in Britain, cost us £130 or to put it another way, two weeks' wages. Consumers have grown accustomed to consumer goods being made in China and sold here for a fraction of what, in real terms, they used to cost. So own up, citizens. How much are you prepared to pay to subsidise Comrade Jez's Number One All-British Washing Machine Factory?

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

THIS week saw the introduction of a pair of beavers to a stream in the Forest of Dean. Or as it will shortly be known, the Lake of Dean.

OUR changing language. Full marks in the creative-English stakes to the police officer on Radio 4 who described a rise in acid attacks from 700 a year to 800 per year as "a de-escalation." What she meant was that the rate of increase was slowing down. It's a bit like inflation which makes prices go up, even when it's falling.

I PRESS the computer key and TV Licensing replies: "Thank you. Your TV licence application was successful." Depends how you define successful. I am poorer by £150.50 yet I seem to watch less BBC than ever before. This week I have been mostly watching Netflix.

SPELLCHECK. Netflix = Reflux.

IN the debate over whether the insult "gammon" is racist, a reader insists the term has "zero racist comment." Which is exactly what they used to say about golliwogs, the N-word and the Black and White Minstrels. Don't you just hate being on the wrong side of history?

THE BBC's religious slot Thought for the Day, is reserved for approved religions, despite lobbying by atheists, humanists, pagans and druids. One item this week was a common-sense discourse on the costs of funerals by a Church of England vicar. Unless I dozed off, there was not a religious line in it. The piece could have been delivered just as well by an agnostic, rain-dancer or Jedi knight. The idea that only God-botherers have opinions worth listening to is a form of discrimination. Unworthy, Auntie.

BIG questions of our age. "How can you have a servant at home who keeps their own passport with them? What's worse is they have one day off every week, " Kuwaiti social-media star Sondos Alqattan on the problem of employing Filipina maids. Servants, eh? Who'd have 'em?

SHARKS are flocking (do sharks flock?) to Cornwall. As sea temperatures rise it is not a question of whether someone will be devoured by a British shark, but when. Yet the official line seems to be that sharks are magnificent, intelligent creatures that we should adore and not fear. I prefer Peter Benchley's definition in his great novel, Jaws. A shark is a swimming appetite.

WHILE we're on it, who decided in all the latest nature programmes, that killer whales should suddenly be rebranded as Orcas? They have not gone all huggy-feely, vegan and fluffy overnight and I suspect they not only think of themselves as killers but are proud to be introduced as such. Yeah, technically I'm an Orca but just call me Killer, right?

THE more humid it gets, the more I am reminded of that silly, throwaway and yet unforgettable line from One Foot in the Grave (BBC) when Victor Meldrew's chatty neighbour Nick (Owen Brenman) flips the fence panel aside and asks: "Is it moist or is it me?"

TALKING POINT

Beautiful game? It's just one big cliché

The football season is just a couple of days away but don't expect the main action to be taking place on the pitch.

Far from it, in fact. Away from the glare of the TV cameras and plodding punditry is where the modern game is played out these days.

Typically topical and candidly controversial, Talking Point offers the following top 10 highlights of 2018-19:

1 Many an eyebrow will be raised in the first month of the season when at least half a dozen clubs will lose patience with their coaches. Yes, it's time to jump aboard the Managerial Merry-go-Round.

2 Social media will be 'buzzing' after a player/manager/commentator oversteps the mark and posts something to cause 'outrage' and 'disgust'. It happens all the time so why do we still get so uptight?

3 A newborn child will be landed with the names of all the players at the club his father (and it's usually down to the dad) supports. Time to call in the NSPCC?

4 Back in social media land, there will be regular updates on an 'ardent' supporter who has booked a flight from the other side of the world, only to be thwarted in getting to their 'match of a lifetime' by a strike by air traffic controllers.

5 A 'warts and all' autobiography will 'lift the lid' on the excesses and corruption behind the shiny facade of the beautiful game. Note the timing of publication . . . just in time for the Christmas market.

6 Several clubs will brag about having a 'celebrity supporter' who has crawled out of the woodwork having watched a few World Cup games on the telly.

7 At some stage in the season, a family will be pictured wearing the team colours of two rival sides who are playing each other that week. Headline? "Family loyalties put aside until final whistle".

8 A survey, probably by an estate agents, will show how house prices are affected by the proximity to a football ground, omitting the problem of trudging home having parked half a mile away when the streets are clogged up with supporters' cars.

9 A cliché will spring up that will get everyone gnashing their teeth by the end of the season. My money's on "They're in a love train", as coined by Glenn Hoddle when England players stood in a queue waiting for a corner to be taken.

10 'Council busybodies' will 'stick their nose in' when someone paints the outside of their house in their team colours.

There it is, our national sport in all its glory. If you're a football fan, don't get too irate. If you're not, I'm afraid you'll just have to grin and bear it. Here we go, here we go, here we go!

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Roll on Brexit but not in name only

IN response to Robert Perry and what appears to be his monthly Brexit Bashing Blog, the latest titled 'Brexit bullying tactics not democracy'. The complete irony of his use of the word bullying seems lost on Mr Perry, bearing in mind the EU's attitude towards the UK and it's negotiating tactics.

Amusingly, Mr Perry still finds it difficult to believe that the largest democratic vote in our history dared to have voted to leave the increasingly sovereignty-sapping and dictatorial EU. He cites several so-called benefits of being in the EU, none of which are or should be under threat, unless the EU wishes to be vindictive. Perhaps the loss of our servicemen and women in two world wars has no value to the EU mafia?

He goes on to quote Nigel Farage fighting for another vote if Leave had lost but fails to consider that it took the public 40 years to have a say on our membership. Mr Perry would like another one before we have even left!

Less than 25 per cent of the UK voted to remain. The EU has been no friend of the UK. It helped large motor manufacturers financially to move production to eastern Europe with the loss of thousands of jobs. It allows for freedom of movement which helps depress wages and has helped destroy our fishing and agricultural sectors. We also have to subsidise the economy of other countries whilst our public services go down the pan.

Thankfully, despite the efforts of Remoaners like Mr Perry, the majority see through Project Fear. Roll on Brexit just not the one in name only currently proposed by our Prime Minister.

RICHARD SMITH
Halesowen

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
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dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

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Listen to the doctors and nurses

I write in response to the excellent and revealing article on July 19 by Dayna Farrington: 'A and E Nurses quit over safety concerns'.

The anonymous member of staff stated that the main concern was that they are not being listened to and, with staff reductions, safety is being compromised.

The response from Diane Wake, the trust's chief executive, highlights this concern about not listening to staff. She regards the staff turnover as natural! After eight resignations and 42 medical staff signing a letter of concern, such a statement would be laughable if it wasn't so serious!

There are staff at Russells Hall Hospital who are unhappy and genuinely concerned. Well done to the staff for raising such worries.

The senior executives seem uncaring and quite disdainful of criticism. The staff need to be listened to.

C STOLL
Halesowen

Please Mr Perry, don't imply that Leavers are 'thick'

I AM sick and tired of it being implied that people who voted pro Brexit are too thick to understand what they voted for.

Yes, only half the population voted but anyone entitled to vote had that opportunity.

The vote was in favour of leaving. Maybe Mr Perry needs to look up the meaning of the word democracy?

Theresa May and the Remainers are going against democracy which, technically, is treason.

MRS L HOMER
via email

A strange definition of democracy

ROBERT Perry's idea of democracy fully complies with the EU definition When a vote doesn't agree with their idea, just make them vote again until they reach the right result ie the one that the EU want.

The EU flagrantly interferes in sovereign country elections.

The EU destabilised a democratically elected government in the Ukraine bringing the continent to the closest point of war with Russia since the Cold War. So Mr Perry should take off those rose-tinted glasses when talking about how peaceful, stable and collaborative the EU is.

No matter what the proportion of a country's population votes in an election the result is still valid. Or is this another interpretation of democracy Mr Perry and his beloved EU is trying to introduce. Sounds very authoritarian to me.

GARRY HICKMAN
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Toys R Us store to make way for shops

A TOYS R Us in the Black Country – shut down after the toy chain collapsed – will be demolished under plans to make way for a new retail development.

The large store, off Birchley Island in Oldbury, closed its doors in April.

A retail development, also taking up some of the car park, will replace it.

The West Midlands Combined Authority were approached over the proposal last month as the unnamed developer wants backing on the scheme.

The project involves knocking down the Toys R Us store, which had been operating since the 1990s.

The toy chain collapsed with the loss of 2,000 jobs in February. A decision was taken to close all the chains' 106 stores after administrators failed to find a buyer. The company hit problems when it was unable to pay a £15 million tax bill.

Toys R Us branche at the Merry Hill Centre in Dudley and at St Andrews in Birmingham also closed down.

Crafty kids will be heading for the Cone this summer

THERE'S lots to do at the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley this summer.

There's a chance to make something in glass with bookable sessions throughout the holidays at the historic cone on High Street.

Sessions include Creative Glass, Tinga Tinga and Cityscape on today (Friday) and tomorrow with a focus on the surrealism of Dali on August 10 and Aboriginal Art August 17, then Japanese Manga comic book art on August 24 and Clarice Cliff August 31. Sessions cost £10 per child and must be booked in advance.

For youngsters five and over there are glass fusion sessions on Wednesday (August 8) and on August 23 there will be a chance to make glass ice lollies and jelly fish. Sessions cost £5 at 10.30am, 11.30am, 1pm and 2pm, and must be booked.

Jewellery

There are new 'In the Style of' sessions where youngsters can learn about an artist, movement or technique and apply new skills to work in a range of mediums. Longer sessions run from 10.15am to noon and are suitable for ages eight and up, costing £6. Sessions include Tinga Tinga on today (Friday), Dali next Friday, Aboriginal art on August 17, Manga on August 24 and Art Deco on August 31. Sessions must be booked. There are also two-hour jewellery making sessions on Monday and again on August 20 from 10.30am. Sessions cost £10 for ages 11 and over. Book in advance.

The cone is hosting an 'out of this world' family day on Thursday (August 9), teddy bears picnic on August 16 and a pirates and mermaid day on August 30, each 10.30am to 2.30pm.

Visitors can also drop in to the cone's design studios and watch free glass blowing demonstrations every weekend.

Visitors to the Stourbridge Glass Quarter can learn about the area's history thanks to two updated trails celebrating the area's heritage.

Stourbridge has been associated with the glass industry for more than 400 year. The self-guided trails take visitors around such landmarks as the Red House Glass Cone, Bonded Warehouse and Ruskin Glass Centre. A booklet can be downloaded from www.discoverdudley.org.uk www.glassquarter.org.uk and a video, called 'Crystal mile walk' is available to view online at www.youtube.com/user/dudleymbc

Top comics come to town

James Acaster, whose comedy special features on Netflix, tops the bill

BIG comedy names, including Netflix star James Acaster, are coming to Stourbridge to raise money for charity Reverse Rett in the name of Daisy, a four-year-old Stourbridge girl with a rare neurological disorder called Rett Syndrome.

Also on the bill at Stourbridge Town Hall on October 26 will be Ivo Graham, Kingswinford's Danny Clives and MC Andy Robinson. For tickets see www.boroughhalls.co.uk or call (01384) 812812.

Meanwhile, the comedy continues at Stourbridge Town Hall when the Kum-n-avaloff monthly comedy night returns on September 6 with a line-up of Susan Murray, Harvey Hawkins, Neil McFarlane, plus MC Dan Smith.

The Lost Hancocks, featuring rarely heard scripts from a comedy show that was written for the great Brummie comedian Tony Hancock before the classic Hancock's Half Hour, will be performed at Stourbridge Town Hall on September 19.

Entitled Vacant Lot and penned by West Bromwich-born Goon Show writer Larry Stephens, it will be performed in the Wollaston Studio by a cast including impressionist James Hurn (BBC2's Dead Ringers) as Hancock, and Janice Connolly.

Mayor backing bloom award bid across Halesowen

THE Mayor of Dudley will show his support for Halesowen's bid to win a coveted Royal Horticultural Society award when national judges visits the town this month.

A team of more than 100 volunteers,is busy putting the finishing touches to the Halesowen in Bloom entry for the national finals of the Britain in Bloom awards 2018.

Having scooped their third gold medal in last year's regional heats, Halesowen in Bloom was put forward to represent the whole of the Heart of England in the award's national urban community category.

They face competition from Bankside in London and the Stanwix area of Carlisle but Mayor, Councillor Alan Taylor, said he was confident Halesowen has what it takes to win.

Ancestors group mark 40 years of looking at history

THE Midland Ancestors Stourbridge Group, who gather regularly to look into family and local history, recently celebrated their 40th anniversary.

Members met at St Peter's Church Centre, in Pedmore, to host a special event with guest of honour Dudley's mayor, Councillor Alan Taylor and the mayores, his wife Winifred, along with society president Dr Chris Leigh MD and executive officers.

The mayor was shown exhibits from the group's past by long-standing member Jean Weston.

A buffet was laid out after and there was entertainment from Marlene Watson. Dr Leigh toasted the mayor and the Stourbridge group.

For more information about the group email stourbridgegroup@midanc.uk

Sky's the limit as Sam makes Big Leap for MS

Sam last skydived to mark her 30th birthday and is to leap again in aid of the MS Society, to help others with multiple sclerosis

AN adventurous Amblecote woman with multiple sclerosis is preparing for a skydive to raise funds for people living with the same condition.

Sam Cartwright, who was diagnosed with the neurological disease 14 years ago, will be making the jump as part of the MS Society's Big Leap challenge.

Sam will jumping out of a plane at 13,000 feet, strapped to a qualified instructor, to freefall at more than 120mph.

She will be taking the plunge on September 2, at Hinton Skydiving Centre in Northamptonshire.

Sam, 42, said: "I have had MS for 14 years and during that time I have met many people with the condition and made lots of friends. We are all being challenged with different symptoms and dealing with different treatments, but together we all keep positive and support one another."

September's jump won't be the first time for Sam – in 2006, she raised more than £1,400 for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme with a jump on her 30th birthday. To sponsor Sam visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sam-cartwrightmssociety

Sam is to jump again 12 years on

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Morris and hip hop mash up in family show

A UNIQUE family-friendly live music and dance show featuring everything from morris to martial arts is coming to Stourbridge

QUEST, featuring the award-winning folk group the Demon Barbers, is at Stourbridge Town Hall on Saturday, September 1. The show has been put together by Breaking Tradition, regarded as the UK's leading folk and hip hop dance company.

The show is said to be suitable for families, gamers and live music and dance lovers of all ages.

Written by award-winning writer and actor Stacey Sampson, QUEST fuses Morris dancing, clog and sword dancing with popping, locking, breaking and martial arts to the beat of new songs and traditional melodies with an electronic edge.

Damien Barber, artistic director of Breaking Tradition and frontman of the Demon Barbers, said: "We are all excited to have produced a new dance show specifically aimed at a younger generation which incorporates traditional folk customs into the digital world.

"We have been delighted by the fantastic reaction it's been receiving so far around the country, and look forward to bringing it to Stourbridge in September."

Tickets are on sale now. To book visit www.boroughhalls.co.uk website or call the box office on (01384) 812812.

More than 1,900 drink-drivers caught

ALMOST 2,000 drink-drivers were caught in the West Midlands during 2017, latest figures show.

Over half of those motorists convicted were caught during the summer, a percentage that it is feared will rise this year given the prolonged sunny spell before the weekend's downpours. A total of 1,939 drink-drivers were caught locally last year.

Mother Natalie Moore, baby Katherine and grandmother Jayne Aston

Oh baby, what lovely locks!

Natalie and father Anthony Matthews with baby Katherine

Six month old Katherine Mary Matthews shows off her unusually long hair.

Her hair was thick when she was born

Peek-a-boo: Six-month-old Katherine admires her hair

Hair's to you, baby Katherine

YOU can hair-dly believe that it's real!

Little Katherine Mary Matthews, aged just six months, is already sporting flowing dark locks.

Growing up to eight inches long at the last count, the Wordsley tot had a full head of hair when she was born said mother Natalie Moore – and it hasn't stopped growing since.

Natalie said: "She's got a lot of hair. We did measure it from the crown and in some parts it was getting to eight inches.

"I can't go anywhere without strangers stopped me and saying 'oh my god, I've never seen a child with that much hair'.

"They call her 'the baby with all the hair' at the doctor's surgery."

Ms Moore said it took 'extra time' to properly take care of Katherine's hair.

She added: "I've had to keep her hair nice and fresh in the warm weather. She can have the hairdryer on a little bit. It does take some extra time to rinse her hair and dry it.

"I had to trim her fringe a few months ago, but it's starting to come back again.

"It's something she has got used to from an early age.

"It's just gone past her neck and past her shoulders now."

Long hair seems to run in the family, as Ms Moore's relatives all have long hair.

The 33-year-old added: "She's got an older sister Scarlett who is seven and a two-year old brother, Anthony.

"They both had a lot of hair but nothing at all like Katherine's.

"It's in our genes. She's got that gene from my side of the family. She's very similar to me.

"When I was four, I could sit on my hair so that was quite long.

"I had a lot of hair and my mom was born with quite a lot of hair as well and my nan, she's 84 and she's got black hair – with just a little bit of grey."

Ms Moore said she did not intend to cut Katherine's hair just yet, instead choosing to let it grow.

She added: "I would like it to grow as long as possible and maybe have a trim when it's needed.

"She's used to me brushing it now, so if she's used to it I plan on letting her have long hair. I would like it to grow as long as possible and have a trim when needed."

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Queen Alexandra's Smile for Joel boost

IT was all smiles for a Black Country charity after receiving a donation of nearly £1,000 from Miss Black Country.

Rowley Regis singer Alexandra Darby, who hold the title this year, has been busy fundraising for good causes all across the region as part of her Miss England journey.

She is competing in her first Miss England final next week at Resorts World in Birmingham after being crowned Miss Black Country back in March, and has received lots of support from the local community. The beauty queen, a former pupil at Cradley Heath's Ormiston Forge Academy, has most recently raised £859 for Wednesbury charity Smile for Joel, which helps families of victims of overseas terrorism attacks.

The 22-year-old said: "Through the year I have raised money for local charities, the main one being Smile for Joel. As a previous student of Ormiston Forge Academy I wanted to go back and do a fundraising event to show the students what you can achieve when leaving education.

"I decided to do a school talent show and each student gave me a pound when entering with all proceeds going to Smile for Joel."

Alexandra Darby with Ormiston Forge Academy sixth formers Holly Cox and Drew Priest, both 17

Boss is disqualified after firm collapses

A CONSTRUCTION boss has been disqualified after his company collapsed owing almost £470,000.

Martin Baker, director of C J M Tiling Limited, Cradley Heath, has been disqualified for seven years after failing to declare all the company's sales income. The 50-year-old of Oldbury cannot now promote, manage, or be a director of a limited company.

Jane Knight, of the Insolvency Service, said: "Under-declaration of the VAT deprives the Exchequer of the monies needed to provide public services."

The ban came after HMRC made unannounced visits to the Halesowen Road construction company in December 2015 and March 2016. Officers found Baker had under-declared the company's VAT liabilities by not revealing all of its sales and used an additional bank account to deposit his sales income. The company later went into liquidation owing £469,673, including at least £344,221 in VAT.

Kasia failed by mental health services

A YOUNG woman from Halesowen who took her own life weeks before turning 21 was failed by the mental health system, an inquest heard.

Katarzyna Woloncewicz, also known as Kasia, was found dead from asphyxia on March 29 this year.

Kasia suffered from depression and anxiety and had been seen by staff at Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust.

By Megan Archer

An investigation was launched after Kasia's mother accused the trust of failing her daughter.

Kasia had called Dudley Talking Therapy Services (DTTS) multiple times after being referred by a GP but never received a call back.

On Monday at Black Country Coroners Court, assistant coroner Emma Whitting said: "Kasia took her own life but this was contributed to by system failures in the mental health service that let Kasia down in her time of need. This has now been recognised by the trust."

Unacceptable

Giving evidence, joint medical director at the trust, Dr Mark Weaver, admitted it was 'completely unacceptable' that Kasia never received a call back from DTTS.

She phoned once in February and again in March, but was met both times with an answering machine asking her to leave her details, which she did.

Following the inquest Kasia's mother, Jayne McCracken, said her daughter did not receive the help and support she needed.

"Kasia was failed by Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust," added Mrs McCracken. "I hope the trust learns lessons from Kasia's death and implements changes."

A spokesperson for the trust said: "The death of Katarzyna Woloncewicz was a very tragic event and we would like to repeat our sincerest condolences to her family.

"We have completed a thorough investigation and as a result we will be making improvements to the way we respond to patient referrals and reviewing the effectiveness of our Mental Health Assessment Service.

"We are also addressing the way in which we respond to self-referrals to our Talking Therapies Service.

"We support and care for many people in crisis and we take learning from all incidents seriously so we can continuously improve the care we provide for patients."

Storage firm pays £1.25m for factory

A FORMER factory has been sold for more than £1.25 million to become warehousing for a self-storage business looking to expand in the West Midlands.

The Sun Works in Quarry Bank had been empty since engineering firm Bird Stevens went into administration two years ago with the loss of around 50 jobs.

The century old presswork, welding and assembly firm had been based at the site since it was founded. But the Sun Street building – which has sat empty ever since – is now to get a fresh lease of life with new owners Safestore, one of the UK's biggest self-storage businesses moving on to the land.

Safestore has already secured planning permission from Dudley Council to demolish the old Bird Stevens factory.

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Ray shows his love of lorries on 67th birthday

Black Country haulier Ray Hingley displays just a selection of his collection of lorries in celebration of his 67th birthday

THEIR lorries have long been a familiar sight on the roads of the Black Country..

One of the brothers behind A. Hingley Transport Ltd – Ray Hingley – has been showing off some of his beloved vintage collection along the busy A449 Wolverhampton Road.

Drivers passing through Stourton will no doubt have seen the impressive fleet parked up outside Mr Hingley's home. It was all part of the businessman's 67th birthday celebrations.

Mr Hingley said the restoration of vintage lorries was both his career and passion, which he had been enjoying since he was a teenager.

Standing proudly next to a 1949 Atkinson eight-wheeler, he said: "It's in my blood – my living and my hobby.

"My wife and I even had our wedding photo on the back of one of the trucks on our 40th wedding anniversary too.

Collection

"We're doing up our 14th truck now. I just wanted to say thank you to all the people who stopped to look at them and appreciated them on my birthday."

The Hingley family own a collection of vintage trucks spanning from 1929 to 1926, based at A. Hingley Transport in Brierley Hill.

Ray works with his family – two brothers Alan and Keith, wife Tina and sons Alex and Ray – to restore them.

The 100-strong team at the firm includes his sister Andrea, other family members, and good friends.

A. Hingley Ltd is a well-known family hauliers business in the Black Country, set up by Ray's father Arthur in 1968, and made a limited company by his sons in 1969.

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Emergency ambulance is talk topic

Stourbridge Ladies

STOURBRIDGE Ladies Society met at the end of June to listen to the speaker for the month Geoff Woodford on the Midland Air Ambulance.

Mr Woodford has been a volunteer for 27 years with the Air Ambulance. He explained how the Air Ambulance had come into being and his role as a volunteer.

It had all started with a meeting in a pub, £1 being the first donation to start the raising of money to form the charity to provide an Air Ambulance. The NHS Ambulance service had no money for funding so all money was to be raised by charity. Mr Woodford at that time was a radio ham who spread the word over the airways, raising awareness and donations.

The first helicopter was hired from a company in Aberdeen where it had been used as transport to the North Sea oil fields. A second helicopter was soon needed, again hired, but the third one has been purchased with the help of large donations. These helicopters are based at Cosford, Strensham and Tatenhill.

Mr Woodford was thanked for his interesting talk and given a donation for the Air Ambulance.

Stourbridge Ladies Society meets on the last Tuesday of each month in the Amblecote Room at Stourbridge Town Hall at 2pm. On September25 Pat Boyd will talk about 'Upstairs and Downstairs'.

Rock Houses history is in the spotlight

Kingswinford TG

KINGSWINFORD TG met on a very hot evening in July in the community centre in High Street.

Chairman Chris Moy welcomed one visitor and one new member. There were several absences.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approve and signed. The leaders of various groups announced forthcoming events, which included lunches out. A visit to Hagley Hall for a tour and afternoon tea is planned. The Scrabble group continues as usual and the Wednesday Club will be meeting in August for a craft evening.

Joyce Major gave a short account of the National Annual meeting, held in Brighton. Members were informed that next year it will be held in Cheltenham. Tickets are now available for the Federation Annual Luncheon at the Copthorne Hotel. There was an invitation from Wollaston Guild to join them on a trip to the Wedgewood Museum.

Speaker for the evening David Bills spoke about The Rock Houses at Kinver, illustrated by slides. He was thanked by Sue Wilson. Kath Turner was thanked for providing a lovely floral arrangement for the chairman's table, which Alva Staves won as a raffle prize. The other prize was won by Elaine Stelling.

On August 13, the subject will be the ups and downs of fostering children.

Members double as club grows stronger

Kingswinford Folk Dance Club

KINGSWINFORD Folk Dance Club held its final gathering of the academic year on July 19.

It was a sweltering hot evening but that did not prevent everyone from having a very lively evening

The reserve callers were in charge of the dances chosen, and they proved to be a varied and lively selection.

As usual time passed very quickly, as it does when you are having a good time. Somehow, everyone made time to catch up on news and Chris was on her toes dishing out tickets for dances taking place during the summer break whilst collecting the names of those wishing to attend one during the autumn.

The club has gone from strength to strength this year having just about doubled its membership.

Thanks for this must be extended to the busy but informal committee and the variety of dancing styles on offer. However, the club only does social dancing. It is open to anyone who is interested. Meetings take place in St Mary's School in Queen Street on alternate Thursdays.

The first session of autumn will be on September 13 at 7.30pm.

Meeting a real ding-dong

Sedgley Townswomen's Guild (Evening)

SEDGLEY Townswomen's Guild (Evening) welcomed Mary Zielonka to its July meeting to speak about the art of bell ringing.

Mary, an accomplished bell ringer at All Saints' Church, Sedgley, took volunteers through their paces in some bell ringing patterns using hand bells.

The Guild meets at Sedgley Community Centre at 7.15pm. on the third Monday in the month and organises an increasing range of activities. The next meeting is on September 17, when the speaker will be Lichfield town crier, Ken Knowles.

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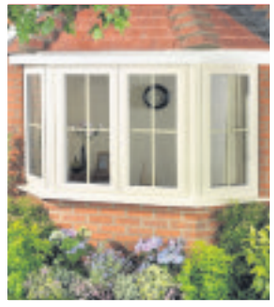
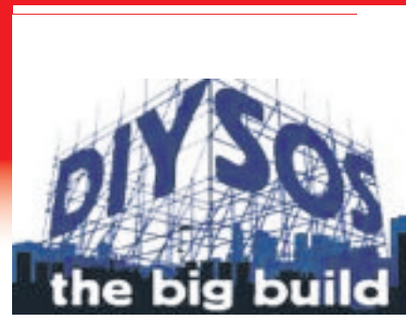

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New Beat as exotic beers come to Lye

A NEW brewery which began life in the West Country is set to start operations in the Black Country.

Beat Brewery has already been going for two years in Somerset but production of its range of beers is moving to the Old Forge Trading Estate, off Dudley Road in Lye.

Beat, which produces vegan-friendly craft beers and gives them names tied to various musical themes, has been bought by Lye businessman Mick Rogers.

Mr Rogers also runs powder coating business R&M Metal Finishing at the same site.

Mr Rogers said they were being advised by the former owner on setting up the five-barrel brewery which will produce casks and mini kegs. Some of the beers will also be bottled.

Beat's award-winning ales include Rocka, Raver, New Wave, Metal Head, Funk and Cosmic Pop. The brewery also makes Glam, an IPA described as the only lychee based beer in the UK.

Mr Rogers said that once brewing was established at the new site there were plans to produce a new range of Black Country beers under the Top Cat name as well.

"Its all pretty exciting moving into a new line of business," said Mr Rogers.

He also plans to open a factory outlet on the site to sell the beers in about six months time.

£15m airport terminal extension is proposed

BIRMINGHAM International Airport could be in line for a major extension.

Plans for a £15 million revamp of the terminal building have been submitted to Solihull Borough Council.

The scheme involves some demolition work and reconfiguration and will see the departure lounge and baggage area increased in size. The airport is anticipating increasing passenger numbers.

Workmen look at the scene of the flood in Tividale

Water gushes into the road

At Oakthorpe Gardens gardens were turned into ponds

At work repairing the burst pipe that caused Friday's flood

Flood water inches away from a door

The cleaning up operation gets under way

Burst pipe floods homes

A MAJOR road between Dudley and Birmingham was closed for several days after a burst water pipe flooded the road and several homes near busy Burnt Tree Junction.

Water was up to a foot deep along the A4123 New Birmingham Road in Tividale and the ruptured water main saw water gush through five houses on Friday.

Oakthorpe Gardens – backing onto the New Birmingham Road – was affected after water cascaded down a bank behind the homes.

Water gushed through Frances Markley's house in the street, which backs onto the Birmingham New Road. The 86-year-old's home was the worst affected by the incident with water four inches deep in her kitchen.

She said: "The girl down the way knocked round on my door at 5.30am and asked if I was alright. I asked why and she said there was all water everywhere. It was coming off the New Road.

"My lounge and kitchen is soaked. My carpet is soaking wet. It all came from off the main road. The water was gushing and took my wheelie bin from outside my kitchen door.

"I had someone coming to wash my conservatory and clean the slabs in the garden that day and I had my garden done the day before. It is absolutely squelching. It's upset me but it could have been worse I suppose."

Emergency services arrived around 5am, after residents had been woken by the flood, and the main road was blocked between Birmingham New Road and Wolverhampton Road. Southbound the route was to remain closed between Regent Road and Walford Street until Tuesday this week, Sandwell Council say.

Neighbour Mag Connaire, 63, praised the fast action by workmen to solve the issue. "The fire officers, the council and water board have done a great job," she said. "They were on top of it as soon as it was reported. The water came down the bank behind the houses. It was very deep in the garden. A few more inches and it would have come into the house."

A spokesman for South Staffs Water apologised for inconvenience and said that although the water did not look clear it was not harmful to health.

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Tree damage has cost taxpayers £320,000

DAMAGE to homes caused by council-owned trees has cost the taxpayer more than £320,000 in just four years.

Figures reveal the cash settlements made by each council to homes in the Black Country and Staffordshire.

They include an £18,200 pay-out in Walsall for damage caused to a patio by roots, £18,776 in Sandwell for a tree which fell on a garage and home and £14,450 in Dudley for property subsistence caused roots.

While Sandwell, Walsall and Dudley settled six-figure sums overall and Staffordshire five-figure sums, Wolverhampton council did not pay out for one claim relating to home damage caused by trees.

The figures comes a month after it was revealed councils in the Black Country had chopped down a total of 6,359 trees over the past three years.

One family impacted by overgrowing tree roots outside their home was the Hadleys, who moved into their home in Priory Road in Dudley in 2000.

Cracks

Three years later they discovered cracks on the walls in their home and the insurance company had to be called for a major rebuild of the house.

Julie and Erik Hadley still live at the property with their 34-year-old son James. Their insurance company received £40,000 from Dudley Council.

Mrs Hadley said: "We had to stay in the property while major work was being done to the house. Councils need to take the issue more seriously rather than allowing Tarmac to be put over growing roots. It's an important issue and, as you can see, it can end up costing the councils a lot of money."

Julie Hadley discovered cracks in her Dudley home caused by tree roots

In Dudley, where the council settled 25 cases totalling £110,815, Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environment services, said: "We regularly carry out tree inspections and deal with any trees that are found to be dead, dying or dangerous as a priority over all other tree work to ensure the safety of our residents.

"The council only pays claims for which it is legally liable and these figures, showing a small number of cases over a three year period, are in line with most neighbouring authorities.

"Trees play a vital role in our communities, filtering air, acting as a haven for wildlife, creating attractive landscapes and generally contributing to community wellbeing, which is why we fell trees which present significant risk to people or property, and always investigate concerns raised."

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Star-studded summer in the inner city

A series of big name concerts are being held in Birmingham city centre during August and September, called the Skyline Series.

Brian Wilson of The Beach Boys, James Arthur, Garbage and The The are coming to Digbeth Arena for a series of open-air inner city concerts, whilst Texas and Imelda May have changed venue to play Symphony Hall under the Skyline banner.

First up on August 24 is music legend Brian Wilson, peforming the classic Pet Sounds album. Support from Turin Brakes.

On August 25 the bill topper is James Arthur, who won The X Factor in 2012. He has grown into an accomplished musical artist with hits including Impossible, You're Nobody 'til Somebody Loves You, Say You Won't Let Go and Naked.

A week later, on September 1, Sharleen Spiteri's Texas team up with rockabilly rebel turned torch singer Imelda May. Glasgow's Sharleen and co will be bringing the tour for their latest album Jump On Board to Brum, after Dublin's Imelda sings songs from her Life Love Flesh Blood album. Support from British country duo Ward Thomas.

Matt Johnson's 80s hitmakers The The team up with Field Music in Digbeth on September 7. Fresh from accepting a career-crowning NME Icon Award award, Shirley Manson brings Garbage to the city centre venue on September 8.Support from Maximo Park and Honeyblood.

See www.skyline-series.com

The boys are back in town – Iron Maiden at Genting Arena

We've still got passion

IRON MAIDEN will return to Birmingham to headline the city's Genting Arena on Tuesday.

Following the massively successful global tour of 2016-17 in support of their 16th studio album The Book Of Souls, Iron Maiden are back on the road again with the Legacy Of The Beast World Tour.

The concept for the tour was inspired by Maiden's mobile game and comic book of the same name, and the stage set design will feature a number of different but interlocking 'worlds'.

Their set list will cover a large selection of 1980s material with a handful of surprises from later albums.

Maiden drummer Nicko McBrain says the band are enjoying their present tour, having started on May 26 in Tallinn, Estonia, in front of a 10,500-capacity crowd at Saku Suurhall.

At that gig, they kicked off with Aces High, complete with a replica of the iconic Spitfire war plane suspended above the stage, which hadn't been performed since 2014, before continuing with Where Eagles Dare, played for the first time in 13 years.

The show also included The Clansman, Sign Of The Cross, For The Greater Good Of God, The Wicker Man and Flight Of Icarus.

Nicko says : "We've got a lot of production, more so than we normally have. When I say 'production,' I mean lots of effects, lots of special staging.

"Of course, you've got all of the Eddies. There's a lot of fireworks, a lot of wonderful effects. Bruce has staged some wonderful theatrics. But, for us, as a band, it gives us an opportunity to play some of the older stuff we haven't played in a long time."

He admits re-learning some of the high speed drumming has been challenging, adding: "I have to warm myself up because I am an old git. But the thing is with Maiden, we all still really, really have a passion to play live."

New look, old name for theatre

The New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham is undergoing a £650,000 revamp and will revert to its original name, The Alexandra.

Work has started on a new façade with digital signs, which will be completed this autumn when the popular venue on Suffolk Street Queensway is relaunched with a brand new logo.

The refurbishment will also see a complete facelift of the theatre's historic Grand Circle, with all seats and carpets replaced, improvements to the bar in the Old Foyer, a revamp of all dressing rooms, window improvements and intricate maintenance to the venue's chandelier.

The works follow a previous £1.25 million spend between 2013 and 2015, when the Piano Bar received a complete revamp complete with Baby Grand Piano and resident pianist.

Theatre director Lisa Mart said: "Since opening its doors in 1901, the Alexandra Theatre has become one of the most important and much-loved buildings in Birmingham. We are incredibly excited to have secured the investment to relaunch the venue in a way that not only modernises our external appearance but also celebrates our history by returning to our original name The Alexandra."

Major shows this year include Saturday Night Fever, Motown The Musical, Dirty Dancing, Rock of Ages, Fame the Musical, David Walliams' Awful Auntie and the stage version of TV favourite Benidorm.

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

MUSICAL TREATS IN THE NEW WELLINGTON

Musical fans from across the region are rubbing their hands together for a musical extravaganza with Live Entertainment Friday and Saturday Night.

The New Wellington in Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill, is not only treating its patrons to great entertainment it is also a great place to eat, drink and socialise.

Set on the main Stourbridge to Dudley Road, not far off Brierley Hill high street, the venue offers a carvery all day everyday from 12 noon to 8pm with a selected main menu from 5pm. With Children being able to eat free during the school holidays Monday - Saturday 12pm - 8pm. T's & C's Apply

For the early started amongst us they also offer a buffet style all you can eat breakfast from 8am to 11am, which has been brought back by popular demand.

The New Wellington also offers a Disco and Karaoke every Friday night, So why not come down and have a sing along!!

New to 2018 - 9 newly refurbished rooms for accommodation, so also now offer B&B at very competitive prices.

Call direct or book online for price and availability.

The New Wellington, 383 Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill, DY5 3LO
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Singer Cariss Auburn

Cariss music videos show love for her home city

"I've got to give credit to my mum, it was her idea for the series."

It might not be seen as rock'n'roll to thank your mum for supporting your fledgling music career – but that sums up the humble attitude of Cariss Auburn.

Wolverhampton born-and-bred, the 27-year-old talks about her love of her home city and her passion for promoting Black History Month.

The 'series' she is talking about is her Wolverhampton Wanders project. It involves Cariss taking her guitar and a local film crew to her favourite places in the city and performing a song that means something to her.

So far she's filmed four entries which are available on her website and YouTube. The first episode saw her take to the Light House media centre at the Chubb Buildings to perform Mary J Blige's Everything and Sweet Female Attitude's Flowers.

Next up was her performing Water Baby by Tom Misch and Loyle Carner at WV Active Central, before No Doubt's Just A Girl at Wightwick Manor and Solange's Don't Touch My Hair at the Grand Theatre.

"I've lived here all my life. I went away for uni but came back because it's home," said the former Highfields and Wolverhampton Grammar school pupil. "For this series I decided to connect with my past and visit places I have spent a lot of time at."

Cariss will be appearing at the Live Vibe Festival at Zara's Bar Club in Birmingham on Sunday and is part of the Project Sound Lounge Festival at Birmingham Town Hall on August 18. Visit www.carissauburnmusic.com

Anton and Erin back to face the music and dance

Strictly Come Dancing veteran Anton Du Beke has announced a major tour early in the new year with his dance partner Erin Boag.

Their latest production, Dance Those Magical Musicals, is scheduled for one West Midlands date at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Saturday, January 26, with 2.30 and 7.30pm performances.

The nation's favourite ballroom couple present a tribute to musical theatre with stunning costumes and breath-taking choreography set to famous tunes from such iconic shows as Phantom of the Opera, Mary Poppins, 42nd Street, Wicked, Top Hat, Hairspray and Jersey Boys.

Joining Anton and Erin on stage will be the London Concert Orchestra, a sensational dance ensemble and star vocalist, Lance Ellington from TV's Strictly band and son of band leader Ray Ellington.

The show will also feature the popular 'Q and A' section which always leads to some fun interaction with the audience.

Anton said: "Get ready for West End live on the dancefloor! Erin and I can't wait to bring our new show to a venue near you. Expect fabulous dancing, music and song."

Fleet-footed Anton is the last remaining of the original professional dancers in the Strictly line-up and is due to return with the show in September. He made it all the way to the final with Katie Derham in 2015 but is yet to lift the Glitterball trophy.

Anton and Erin dance again

West End star Ruthie joins the Songsters

A West End and Broadway singing star will be joining a Black Country choir for a special show next month.

The Gentlemen Songsters Male Voice Choir from Kingswinford will be joined by Ruthie Henshall for Songsters on Broadway at Dudley Town Hall on September 28 at 7.30pm.

Ruthi Henshall's glittering musical theatre began with Cats in London and includes major roles in Miss Saigon, Les Misérables, Oliver!, She Loves Me (for which she won an Olivier Award), and, most recently, Billy Elliot.

She is also about to become the only British actress to have played all three leading female roles in Chicago, as she has been cast as Mama Morton in the London production, having previously been Olivier Award-nominated for her role as Roxie Hart in 1998 and starring as Velma Kelly on Broadway in 1999.

The Dudley concert will also feature performers from West Midlands operatic societies. Tickets are £18 and £20 via 01746 763850, email gsmvchoir@gmail.com or online via boroughhalls.co.uk, the venue's box office.

You only get an Ooo with Adventure Time

Fans of Cartoon Network's surreal show Adventure Time can now explore the bizarre Land of Ooo themselves in new video game Adventure Time: Pirates of Enchiridion. Pendleton Ward's animated TV series has got a loyal cult following – and not only among children – who delight in its mind-bending imagery, colourful graphics, distinctive slang and dry wit.

Bandai Namco's Pirates of Enchiridion lets gamers set sail as they play as Finn, Jake, BMO and Marceline on a quest to save the melting Ice Kingdom.

The game starts in a flooded Land of Ooo, in which the kingdoms are cut off from each other by rising waters, so Finn (the human) and Jake (the shape-shifting dog) set sail to investigate 'what the junk went down'.

Game play is simple and guided but what will really draw in fans are 3D visuals that perfectly match the look of the show and the involvement of the series' vocal cast. It feels like an interactive extended episode of Adventure Time. The game is available for Xbox One, PlayStation 4, Nintendo Switch and PC.

High standard of food and ales

The Island Pool is a classic country pub serving not only a high standard of food but great traditional ales.

A spokesman said: "We have to offer, a carvery with a choice freshly roasted meats accompanied by a wide variety of fresh locally sourced vegetables.

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The pub is open daily between Sunday and Friday, from 12pm and 8pm and Saturday from 12noon to 9pm.

Breakfast is available on Friday, Saturday and Sunday between 8.30am and 11am.

The spokesman added: "Whether it's brunch, lunch or dinner you're joining us for, call to reserve your table on (01562) 850311."

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SATURDAY'S TV AUGUST 4

CHOICE

Angela Carter

Angela Carter: Of Wolves and Women (BBC2, 9pm)
Documentary looking at the life and career of the novelist, whose surreal imagination produced some of the most dazzling fiction of the 20th century. While Carter's early work drew on her claustrophobic childhood and miserable early marriage, it was her experience of living in Japan in the 1970s that liberated both her writing and her sexuality. The film includes rare archive footage and family photos, with contributions from Angela's friends, family and admirers - including Margaret Atwood, Salman Rushdie, Jeanette Winterson and Anne Enright. Narrated by Sally Phillips.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nadiya's Family Favourites. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** European Championships 2018. Hazel Irvine presents further live coverage of day three of the inaugural staging of the multi-sports event in Glasgow, featuring the latest track cycling events. Commonwealth points race gold medallist Elinor Barker is expected to be in action at the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome, and looking to claim the European title. **4.45** European Championships 2018. Hazel Irvine presents further live coverage of day three of the inaugural staging of the multi-sports event in Glasgow, as the men's 100m breaststroke swimming final takes place at the Tollcross International Swimming Centre. Olympic champion and world record holder Adam Peaty will be attempting to add another medal to his growing trophy cabinet, and will start as heavy favourite.
6.40 BBC News.
6.50 Regional Programme.
7.00 European Championships 2018. Clare Balding and Gabby Logan present continued live coverage of day three of the inaugural staging of the multi-sports event from Glasgow, where medals are up for grabs in sports including track cycling at the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome. Home favourite and defending European champion Katie Archibald will be looking to bring the house down in the women's individual pursuit final.
9.00 Casualty. Alicia plucks up her courage to tell the police that she has been raped. Eddie accompanies the paramedics who are called out to treat Jon's wife after she suffers serious burns – and is arrested on his return to the hospital. Bea leaves to make a fresh start in Paris, and Alicia receives an unwelcome visit that has devastating consequences. Last in the series.
9.50 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.
10.10 Film: Iron Man 3. (2013) The armoured avenger faces a terrorist whose plans involve a drug that makes people indestructible. Superhero adventure sequel, with Robert Downey Jr and Gwyneth Paltrow.
12.10 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.15 BBC News.

BBC2

6.35 Marrying Mum and Dad. (R) **7.05** Officially Amazing Goes Bunkers. **7.35** The Dengineers. (R) **8.05** Deadly Dinosaurs with Steve Backshall. (R) **8.35** David Attenborough's Natural Curiosities. (R) **9.00** European Championships 2018. **1.15** Kew on a Plate. (R) **2.15** Garden Rescue. (R) **3.00** Wanted Down Under. (R) **3.45** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.45** Flog It! (R) **5.20** Great British Railway Journeys. (R) **5.50** Inventing the Impossible: The Big Life Fix. (R)
6.50 Proms Extra. Katie Derham focuses on the BBC SO tackling Shostakovich and two unconventional proms featuring folk music. She is also joined by Kerry Andrew, Golda Schultz and Pekka Kuusisto.
7.30 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring initiates a recruitment campaign, but makes the mistake of leaving Wilson in charge of the poster. Comedy, starring Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier. (R)
8.00 Blitz: The Bombs That Changed Britain. Documentary telling the stories of specific bombs dropped on Britain during the Blitz, from their impact on individual lives through to the wider consequences for the Second World War. The first film follows a bomb that fell on Martindale Road in the East End of London on the first night of the Blitz. There was relief that it remained unexploded – but tragedy was soon to follow. The story is told through first-hand testimony, diary excerpts and meticulous records kept at the time. (R)
9.00 Angela Carter: Of Wolves and Women. Profile of the author, featuring animated sequences inspired by her surreal stories and readings from previously unpublished letters and diaries. Narrated by Sally Phillips.
10.00 Alan Partridge: Why, When, Where, How and Whom? Documentary celebrating 25 years of Steve Coogan's comic creation, featuring contributions from writers and co-stars and previously unseen rehearsal and improv footage. (R)
11.00 Live at the Apollo. (R)
11.45 Golf: Women's British Open Highlights. Eilidh Barbour presents action.
12.45 Picnic at Hanging Rock. (R) **1.35 Film:** Jackpot. (2011) **2.55** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Make It Pop. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Mission Employable. (R) **6.55** The Oddbods Show. (R) **7.05** NinjaGo: Possession. (R) **7.30** The Haunted Hathaways. (R) **7.55** Drop Dead Weird. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball on Saturday. **9.25** James Martin's Saturday Morning. (R) **11.20** James Martin's American Adventure. **11.50** Eat, Shop, Save. (R) **12.20** Love Your Garden. (R) **1.20** ITV News; Weather. **1.30** ITV Racing Live: Glorious Goodwood. Coverage of the fifth day of the event. **4.00** The Chase. (R) **5.00** WOS Wrestling.
6.00 ITV News; Weather.
6.15 Regional Programme; Weather.
6.30 Japandemonium. A review of the best Japanese TV, showcasing some of the maddest and funniest moments ever broadcast. This episode includes displays of nasal weightlifting, a hole in the road, and a show in which real rockets are fired at people. Narrated by Melvin Odoom.
7.00 Big Star's Little Star. Stephen Mulhern hosts the entertainment show in which the children of Sally Phillips, Samia Longchambon and Kian Egan spill the beans about their famous parents, talking about their home lives, making heart-warming revelations or telling downright embarrassing stories. The contestants are all hoping to win as much money as possible for their chosen charities.
8.00 Film: The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug. (2013) The party of dwarves and their hobbit ally continue the quest to reclaim their lost kingdom, journeying through the forest home of ancestral enemy the elves and finally facing the dragon that drove them from their home. Meanwhile, Gandalf the wizard investigates the rise of a mysterious dark power. Part two of Peter Jackson's fantasy adventure trilogy based on JRR Tolkien's novel, starring Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage and Orlando Bloom.
11.00 ITV News; Weather.
11.20 Film: Hard Target. (1993) An out-of-work merchant sailor investigates sadistic hunters who stalk human prey in New Orleans. John Woo's action thriller, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme and Yancy Butler.
1.05 Jackpot247. **3.00** Eternal Glory. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Triathlon: Hever Festival of Endurance. **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** The King of Queens. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.25** Frasier. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.55** The Simpsons. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.25** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **2.25** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.00** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.30** The People's Vet. **5.30** Escape to the Chateau: DIY. (R)
6.30 Channel 4 News.
7.00 A Year in the New Forest. In winter, the trees are bare and many creatures are in hibernation, while those that are still awake must do all they can to survive. But as disease threatens to wipe out Ann's fragile young herd of cattle and the forest keepers begin the annual deer cull, death stalks the land. To ward off the cold and dark, the locals take part in an ancient tradition – a dangerous horse race across the forest.
8.00 My Family and the Galapagos. Monty Halls tries to determine whether the ecosystems of the Galapagos can cope with the demands of an increasing number of people who live and visit the islands. He joins a survey team monitoring juvenile sharks, performs a terrifying dive at night, and takes his wife and daughters on a visit to the volcanoes of Isabella Island. The family also adopts a more self-sufficient lifestyle, as they start keeping chickens and growing their own food, and learning how to make small scale fishing sustainable.
9.00 Film: Sisters. (2015) Premiere. Two estranged sisters are reunited when their parents decide to sell the house they grew up in. They return to the family home to clear out their childhood bedrooms, but with their parents away, seize the chance to relive their teenage years and throw one last wild house party. Comedy, starring Amy Poehler.
11.20 Film: The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1. (2011) Romantic fantasy sequel, with Kristen Stewart.
1.25 The Last Leg. (R) **2.20** The Big Narstie Show. (R) **3.15** Hollyoaks. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Naughty Toddlers Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.25** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.20** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **3.20** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **4.20** Bad Tenants, Rogue Landlords. (R) **5.20** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! (R)
6.15 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! Agents visit a former professional footballer who owes £4,500 in unpaid legal fees, and in London the officers chase up a £4,000 debt owed by a car dealer. (R)
7.00 Cricket on 5. England v India. Mark Nicholas presents action from the fourth day of the First Test in the five-match series, taking place at Edgbaston. With commentary by Michael Vaughan, Alison Mitchell, Sourav Ganguly, Ebony Rainford Brent and Charles Dagnall.
7.55 5 News Weekend.
8.00 Blind Date. A familiar face makes a comeback, as Devorshka from series one returns to pick another date, hoping it will be more successful than her last one. Her potential suitors this time are entertainment manager Wes, life coach Richard and a surprise blast from the past. Also hoping to be picked are Kate from Gloucester, Welsh nurse Sarah and Bath beautician Lucie. Presented by Paul O'Grady.
9.00 Gino's Win Your Wish List. Gino D'Acampo hosts this game show in which a family of five contestants choose their dream prizes, then in pairs answer questions to try to bank the items on their wish list. In the final round, two players try to secure all the prizes they have won so far – as well as a dream family holiday.
10.00 The Women with the World's Biggest Hips. Documentary about four plus-size women who are proud of their figures and make the most of them, including one whose hips are eight feet in circumference. (R)
11.05 Too Fat to Work & On Benefits. The lives of people who rely on benefits, beginning with those who are obese, including a man who thinks employers are prejudiced against fat people. (R)
12.00 SuperCasino. **3.10** Body Donors. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Mountain: Life at the Extreme **8.00** Wonders of the Monsoon **9.00** Cardinal: Blackfly Season **10.25** The Summer of Love: How Hippies Changed the World **11.25** Top of the Pops: 1986 **12.25** Jazz Divas Gold **1.25** Mountain: Life at the Extreme **2.25** Wonders of the Monsoon **3.25** Top of the Pops: 1986 **3.55** Close

ITV2
12.00 Catchphrase **12.40** You've Been Framed! Gold **1.45 Film:** Yogi Bear (2010) **2.45** FYI Daily **2.50 Film:** Yogi Bear (2010) **3.25 Film:** Dr Seuss' The Lorax (2012) **4.25** FYI Daily **4.30 Film:** Dr Seuss' The Lorax (2012) **5.10 Film:** Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones (2002) **6.10** FYI Daily **6.15 Film:** Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones (2002) **7.55 Film:** Johnny English Reborn (2011) **8.55** FYI Daily **9.00 Film:** Johnny English Reborn (2011) **10.00** Keith Lemon: Coming in America **10.50** Family Guy **12.20** American Dad! **1.15** Evil Monkeys **2.10** CelebAbility **2.45** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
12.20 Goodnight Mister Tom **2.30** Inspector Morse **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Endeavour **11.00** Vera **1.05** George and Mildred **2.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
12.00 Storage Wars: Texas **1.25** Pawn Stars **3.15 Film:** Battle of Britain (1969) **4.15** FYI Daily **4.20 Film:** Battle of Britain (1969) **5.55** Monster Carp **7.00** World Series of Darts: Auckland **11.00 Film:** Above the Law (1988) **12.00** FYI Daily **12.05 Film:** Above the Law (1988) **1.05** Better Late Than Never **2.00** Minder **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
1.00 The Goldbergs **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.00 Film:** X-Men 2 (2003) **10.40** The Inbetweeners **11.50** Gogglebox **2.00** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **3.00** The Inbetweeners **3.55** Rude Tube **4.20** Rude(ish) Tube **4.45** How I Met Your Mother

Film4
11.00 Arrietty (2010) **1.00** Rio (2011) **2.50** Capture the Flag (2015) **4.40** Young Sherlock Holmes (1985) **6.55** Home Alone (1990) **9.00** Transporter 3 (2008) Underworld courier Frank Martin transports the kidnapped daughter of a crooked government minister across Europe. Action thriller sequel, with Jason Statham and Natalya Rudakova. **11.05** The Cabin in the Woods (2012) **12.55** Spirited Away (2001) **3.25** Close

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SUNDAY'S TV AUGUST 5

CHOICE

Arthur Williams

Flying Across Britain with Arthur Williams (Channel 4, 7pm)
New series. A former royal marine explores Britain from the air in his own 1943 single-seater aeroplane. His journey begins in the West Country, taking in the rolling hills and open plains of Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Dorset and Somerset. Along the way he meets fellow aviation enthusiasts, including an aerobatic champion, a Cotswold craftsman who makes wooden propellers, and a man working on a jet-propelled flying suit. He also attends a public flying display and attempts a landing on a reproduction aircraft carrier.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** BBC News. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **11.25** Songs of Praise. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.15** Live Challenge Cup Rugby League. St Helens v Catalans Dragons (Kick-off 12.30pm). **2.30** Live Challenge Cup Rugby League. Warrington Wolves v Leeds Rhinos (Kick-off 2.45pm). **5.00** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **5.50** BBC News.
6.05 Regional Programme.
6.15 Countryfile. The show comes from East Yorkshire, where John Craven meets Bridlington residents who take traditional coble boats out to sea, Margherita Taylor uncovers a secret art trail in the Wolds and meets poet Ian MacMillan, and Steve Brown learns about different uses for hemp. Plus, Charlotte Smith reports on the impact of tourism on beauty spots and Adam Henson meets a farmer with an active online presence.
7.15 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents the show from Trelissick House and gardens in Cornwall, with unusual finds ranging from an ejector seat from a bomber to a miniature sewing kit.
8.15 Film: Florence Foster Jenkins. (2016) Premiere. A tone deaf socialite imagines she is a great singer, and her conniving yet devoted husband allows her to remain in her fantasy by holding concerts with small, invited audiences. However, reality threatens to intrude when she announces her intention of realising a lifelong dream of performing in New York's Carnegie Hall, recruiting a struggling young pianist to aid her. Fact-based comedy, starring Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant.
10.00 BBC News.
10.20 Regional Programme.
10.30 MOTD: Community Shield Highlights. Manchester City v Chelsea. Gary Lineker presents action from the curtain-raiser to the top-flight campaign, as the Premier League and FA Cup winners clashed at Wembley Stadium.
11.15 Imagine: Jeanette Winterson – My Monster and Me. Writer Jeanette Winterson talks about her childhood in Lancashire. (R)
12.30 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.35 BBC News.

BBC2

6.20 Glorious Gardens from Above. (R) **7.05** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.05** Countryfile. (R) **9.00** European Championships 2018. Live coverage of day four of the inaugural staging of the multi-sports event from Glasgow, featuring rowing, track cycling, swimming, synchronised swimming and gymnastics. **12.15** European Championships 2018. Further live coverage of day four of the inaugural staging of the multi-sports event from Glasgow, featuring road cycling, synchronised swimming, rowing and gymnastics. **5.00** European Championships 2018. Gabby Logan and Clare Balding introduce further live coverage of day four of the multi-sports event from Glasgow, as track cycling and swimming dominate the schedule this evening.
9.00 Travels in Trumpland with Ed Balls. Ed investigates America's gun culture, travelling to Louisiana, the state with the highest statistics for gun murders. He goes on patrol with a sheriff's deputy, who discusses the challenges of policing a heavily armed population, and spends the night in jail with some Trump supporting criminals. He moves on to Parkland in Florida, where he meets survivors of a recent school shooting who are campaigning for stricter gun ownership laws.
10.00 Film: Nightcrawler. (2014) A cynical petty crook is inspired when he sees a freelance camera crew, and decides to go into business filming crime scenes and accidents, then selling the footage to news broadcasters. His determination to stay ahead of the competition leads him down a dark path as his methods become increasingly ruthless. Crime drama, starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Rene Russo and Bill Paxton.
11.50 Golf: Women's British Open Highlights. Eilidh Barbour presents action from the fourth and final day of the event, which this year is staged at Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club in Lancashire.
12.50 Sign Zone: Countryfile. The team visits Exmoor, where Matt Baker attends a residential course teaching children outdoor skills and Margherita Taylor goes in search of the UK's most endangered butterfly. (R) **1.45** Holby City. Fletch is shocked by a face from his past and Hanssen attempts to express his feelings. (R) **2.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Make It Pop. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Mission Employable. (R) **6.55** The Oddbods Show. (R) **7.05** NinjaGo: Possession. (R) **7.30** The Haunted Hathaways. (R) **7.55** Drop Dead Weird. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball on Sunday. **9.25** Japandemonium. (R) **9.50** Cannonball Splash Hits. (R) **10.55** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **12.00** WOS Wrestling. (R) **1.00** ITV News; Weather. **1.15** Big Star's Little Star. (R) **2.15** Catchphrase. (R) **3.00** Tenable. (R) **4.00** Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. (R) **5.00** The Chase. (R)
6.00 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs. Paul helps to train an over-excited beagle, and also meets a toy poodle and a pug that came in as a pair but might be better off finding new homes separately. (R)
6.30 ITV News; Weather.
6.45 Regional Programme; Weather.
7.00 Midsomer Murders. The murder of Midsomer resident and biscuit factory boss Eric Calder leads Barnaby and Nelson to Copenhagen. The pair join forces with local female detectives Birgitte Poulsen and Anna Degn in the hunt for the killer, and during the course of their investigation they discover the businessman had numerous links to the capital. Anglo-Danish collaboration originally shown to mark Midsomer's 100th episode, guest starring Ann Eleonora Jorgensen (The Killing), Birgitte Hjort Sorensen (Borgen), Sanjeev Bhaskar and Joanna Scanlan, alongside Neil Dudgeon. (R)
9.00 Unforgotten. As it becomes clear the suspects are lying, Jake goes in search of Tim Finch's ex-wife to hear her version of events – and uncovers disturbing information about Chris Lowe's past.
10.00 ITV News; Weather.
10.20 Carry On Forever. A look at the golden age of the comedy franchise in the mid to late 1960s, with Amanda Barrie revealing what life was like on the set of Carry On Cleo. (R)
11.20 Tonight at the London Palladium. Bradley Walsh welcomes the cast of 42nd Street to the famous stage, headed by Sheena Easton. Plus, music from Rick Astley, Imelda May and US vocalist Lea Michele. (R)
12.10 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Motor Sport: Volkswagen Racing Cup. **6.40** Motor Sport: Mini Challenge. **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30 Film:** Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days. (2012) Family comedy sequel, starring Zachary Gordon. **3.25** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.25** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **5.30** Homes by the Med. (R)
6.30 Channel 4 News.
7.00 Flying Across Britain with Arthur Williams. New series. A former royal marine explores Britain from the air in his own single-seater aeroplane. His journey begins in the West Country, where he meets an aerobatic champion.
8.00 Hidden Britain by Drone. New series. Tony Robinson presents a second series of the programme that uses drones to shoot aerial footage of areas of Britain that are off limits to the public. In the first episode, he dispatches flying cameras to explore an abandoned theme park, an immense stately home and underground wine vaults belonging to billionaires. The programme also examines the secrets that Argos conceals from the eyes of its customers and contains footage of a flower farm in full bloom, which is closed to the public for 50 weeks of the year.
9.00 The Handmaid's Tale. Offred is sent to a familiar place, while Emily is assigned to a mysterious new house. Guest starring Bradley Whitford (The West Wing).
10.10 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr hosts the comedy panel show's version of the words- and numbers-quiz, inviting Sean Lock and Rob Beckett to take on Jon Richardson and Claudia Winkleman. (R)
11.10 The Shopping Centre: Artist in Residence. Artist Rachel Maclean spends a month living in Birmingham's Bullring Shopping Centre, and makes a film exploring happiness with the help of a large pink rabbit. Last in the series.
12.15 Film: Devil's Knot. (2013) **2.15 Film:** Chevalier. (2015) **4.00** Gillette World Sport. **4.30** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. (R) **5.25** Star Boot Sale. (R) **5.50** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wissper. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.30** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.35** The Secret Life of Kittens. (R) **6.40** Seaside Antics. (R) **6.45** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **7.00** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Thomas & Friends: Extraordinary Engines. (R) **7.30** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.50** Rusty Rivets. (R) **8.00** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.20** Pirata & Capitano. **8.35** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.50** Floogals. (R) **9.05** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.50** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.05** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Access. **10.40** Police Interceptors. (R) **11.25** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.20 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang. (2010) **1.20** Access. **1.25 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang. (2010) Concluded. **2.25 Film:** 13 Going on 30. (2004) **3.25** Access. **3.30 Film:** 13 Going on 30. (2004) Concluded. **4.30 Film:** Cars. (2006) **5.30** Access. **5.35 Film:** Cars. (2006) Concluded.
6.10 Chuckle Time with the Chuckle Brothers. The comedy duo introduce this new clip-show, featuring the funniest fails, flops and falls uploaded to the internet.
6.55 5 News Weekend.
7.00 Cricket on 5. England v India. Action from the fifth day of the First Test in the five-match series, taking place at Edgbaston.
8.00 Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl. (2003) A rogue captain and a blacksmith set sail to rescue a governor's daughter from feared supernatural pirates. Swashbuckling fantasy adventure, starring Johnny Depp and Orlando Bloom.
9.00 5 News Update.
9.05 Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl. (2003) Concluded.
10.50 Film: Green Lantern. (2011) A pilot joins a galactic peacekeeping force with incredible powers and defends Earth from an alien attack. Sci-fi adventure, starring Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively.
11.50 Access. Showbiz news and gossip.
11.55 Film: Green Lantern. (2011) Concluded.
1.05 SuperCasino. **3.10** Autopsy: The Last Hours of Joan Rivers. (R) **4.00** Get Your Tatts Out: Kavos Ink. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 BBC Proms 2018 **9.00** Archaeology: A Secret History **10.00** Entertaining the Troops **11.00** Arena: Whatever Happened to Spitting Image? **12.00** Africa's Magnificent Beasts **1.00** Timeshift: The Ladybird Books Story – The Bugs That Got Britain Reading **2.00** Arena: American Epic **3.00** Archaeology: A Secret History **4.00** Close

ITV2
1.35 You've Been Framed! Gold **2.05 Film:** Step Up Revolution (2012) **3.05** FYI Daily **3.10 Film:** Step Up Revolution (2012) **4.10 Film:** The Smurfs (2011) **5.10** FYI Daily **5.15 Film:** The Smurfs (2011) **6.15 Film:** Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith (2005) **7.15** FYI Daily **7.20 Film:** Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith (2005) **9.00** Love Island: The Reunion **10.35** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.30 Film:** Keith Lemon: The Film (2012) **1.35** FYI Daily **1.40 Film:** Keith Lemon: The Film (2012) **2.10** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.25** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
12.50 Rosemary & Thyme **3.55** Victoria **5.55** Agatha Christie's Poirot **8.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **10.00** The Halcyon **12.05** Wire in the Blood **1.50** Blue Murder **3.35** Road to Avonlea **5.15** Judge Judy **5.35** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
11.50 River Monsters **12.55** Monster Carp **2.00 Film:** Battle of Britain (1969) **3.05** FYI Daily **3.10 Film:** Battle of Britain (1969) **4.40 Film:** Escape to Victory (1981) **5.40** FYI Daily **5.45 Film:** Escape to Victory (1981) **7.00** World Series of Darts: Auckland. **11.00 Film:** Payback (1999) **12.00** FYI Daily **12.05 Film:** Payback (1999) **1.05** The Motorbike Show **2.05** The Protectors **2.30** World Cup Rivalries: Brazil v Italy **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.30 Film: Dr Dolittle (1998) **1.10** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **1.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.30** Young Sheldon **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Escape Plan (2013) **11.15** Gogglebox **12.20** The Big Bang Theory **1.10** Tattoo Fixers **2.15** Rude Tube **3.10** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 Thunderbirds Are Go! (1966) **1.00** Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties (2006) **2.35** Kiki's Delivery Service (1989) **4.45** Megamind (2010) **6.40** We Bought a Zoo (2011) **9.00** Victor Frankenstein (2015) **11.10** Out of the Furnace (2013) **1.25** The Rise (2012) **3.40** Close

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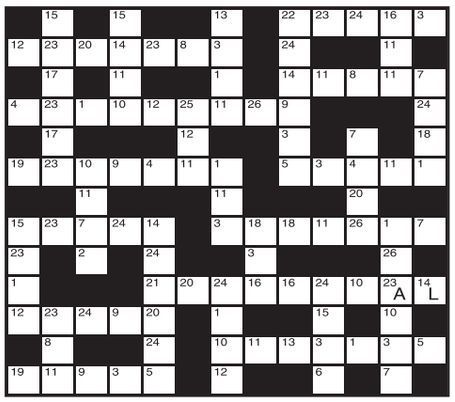
Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1	14 L
2	15
3	16
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6	19
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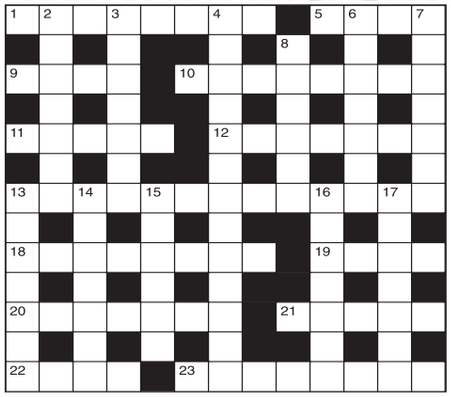
8	21
9	22
10	23 A
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
R	H	I	J	Y	W	C	P	K	B	N	M	L
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
E	D	Q	O	U	S	G	X	T	Z	F	V	A

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues – both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Pure description of one having no rash appearance (8)
5. It's an ingredient in oriental cosmetics (4)
9. Constitute a bench (4)
10. Shocking derision from a militant Puritan (8)
11. I love to change into this material (5)
12. Made by craftsmen approximate in weight (7)
13. Fliers that give song near the southern border? (5-8)
18. Causes misery to ten involved in dreadful storm (8)
19. A route on holiday (4)
20. Devilish attribute of the wicked pupil? (4-3)
21. A group performing in the stalls (5)
22. An indication of spontaneous ignition (4)
23. It's a prey to unusual harshness (8)

Down

2. Act as sponsor and do some upgrading (7)
3. Delay the sentence on a convict (4-3)
4. Being used at bedtime, it could provide the warmest starts! (5,8)
6. Feeling a thrill when there's a giant reformation by the French (7)
7. Originates a secret formula! (7)
8. Some of the foemen Tom blatantly put in a grave position (6)
13. Dogs from the streets (7)
14. Grace may come before this, sweetheart (7)
15. Football team partly cancel event (6)
16. Hide the real mixture (7)
17. He has no fancy ideas about a catalogue (7)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Hallow (8)
5. Ostentation (4)
9. Plot (4)
10. Custom (8)
11. Exclude (5)
12. Building (7)
13. Turmoil (5,2,6)
18. Friendly (8)
19. Achievement (4)
20. Bishopric (7)
21. Indefinite (5)
22. Ogle (4)
23. Agreed (8)

Down

2. Illness (7)
3. Touch (7)
4. Poor memory (13)
6. Aperture (7)
7. Give (7)
8. Deed (6)
13. Disgrace (7)
14. Fatty (7)
15. Rubber (6)
16. Chorus (7)
17. Enactment (7)

Sudoku

		6		5	4		9	
3		2		6			7	
	5		7			6		8
5					6	7		
	4	9		3				
		7	5				8	9
7		1					4	
	8			7		5		2
	9		2		3			

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

4	1	5	3	2	9	8	6	7
8	9	3	4	6	7	5	2	1
6	7	2	5	8	1	9	4	3
9	4	8	6	1	5	3	7	2
7	2	6	8	3	4	1	9	5
5	3	1	9	7	2	4	8	6
3	8	7	1	9	6	2	5	4
1	6	4	2	5	8	7	3	9
2	5	9	7	4	3	6	1	8

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Pamela; 4 Staple; 9 Take a back seat; 10 Untuned; 11 Okapi; 12 Weird; 14 Affix; 18 Roots; 19 Entrant; 21 Determination; 22 Lifted; 23 Stones. Down: 1 Put out; 2 Make the most of; 3 Learn; 5 Take-off; 6 Prevarication; 7 Entail; 8 Hardy; 13 Reserve; 15 Bridal; 16 Let in; 17 Stands; 20 Trait.
QUICK - Across: 1 Candle; 4 Result; 9 Afforestation; 10 Cortege; 11 After; 12 Rover; 14 Pearl; 18 Upset; 19 Refusal; 21 Premeditation; 22 Tested; 23 League. Down: 1 Chance; 2 Nefariousness; 3 Large; 5 Emanate; 6 Uninteresting; 7 Tenure; 8 Askew; 13 Extreme; 15 Output; 16 Grain; 17 Plunge; 20 Frame.

Quiz

1. What is a line of equal temperature on a map called?
2. Of which race was Goliath champion?
3. Which Italian region includes Naples and Capri?
4. Which decorative work's name is derived from the Arabic for 'striped cloth'?
5. Which singer was known as Lady Day?
6. Who set a World Cup scoring record with five goals against Cameroon?
7. On which day of the week is Thanksgiving Day held in the USA?
8. In which country is the Orange River?
9. In which country is the CERN nuclear research organisation based?
10. Who wrote Little Lord Fauntleroy in 1886?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Turkey; 2 Electron; 3 Ethiopia; 4 Kansas; 5 Dressage; 6 Humphry Davy; 7 Kidneys; 8 Musicals; 9 New York; 10 Barbra Streisand.

Niner: GRAPESHOT

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

547189 gives an element,
163124 gives a second element,
2462 gives a third element.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Audi A6 Avant is executive in every way and also good family wheels

By Sharon Walters

It was back in 1994 that the Audi A6 first arrived in the UK, replacing the Audi 100, and making a big change in direction for the German firm.

Always a firm and sound marque but perhaps slightly staid and boring, Audi pushed to develop more sophisticated elegant and exciting cars. And they succeeded. And continue.

The latest version of the A6 arrived a short time ago and is most definitely 'executive' class.

In saloon and Avant styles, it provides a vehicle that can both be for the day-to-day work needs of the executive and also provide the family wheels for weekends and holidays.

Versatile

In Avant (estate) version the A6 is most versatile with 565 litres of luggage capacity in five seat and going up to a 1,680-litre maximum luggage capactiy in two seat mode. Using the standard luggage compartment rail system you can individually position four variable lashing points to secure objects. A tensioning strap, a net and two hooks are also included and an optional load-securing kit with telescopic bar and strap can also be added to allow individual sectioning of the luggage compartment. And to make use of luggage space so easy, the tailgate and the luggage compartment cover open electrically as standard, and an optional sensor is available for the tailgate which enables it to be opened using a simple movement of the foot.

For driver and passengers there's plenty of leg, elbow and headroom in front and rear.

The cabin is and as you would expect high quality trim. There's a wealth of technology – almost too much and I suspect a lot not even opened by many drivers.

And one aspect I particularly like of Audi is the intuitive and logical MMI touch response operating system. You can access to the majority of functions via two large displays in the MMI touch response operating concept.

Infotainment and navigation are managed from the top display, which measures 8.8-inches in standard form or 10.1 inches where the optional MMI navigation plus upgrade has been specified. The lower 8.6-inch display, located in the console in the centre tunnel, is used for the climate control and for the convenience functions and text input.

The latest Audi A6 Avant is certainly a good looker

To create the ultimate high tech environment the fully digital Audi Virtual Cockpit with its 12.3-inch high resolution in-binnacle LCD screen is optionally available, as is a full colour head-up display. And it's certainly a good looker outside.

I don't think there's much left to chance with the comprehernsive package of safety systems and driver assistance systems. Far too many to mention here!

Power comes from four and six-cylinder TDI and TFSI supported by mild hybrid technology with three trim levels. All version come with either seven-speed S tronic twin-clutch or eight-speed automatic transmissions. I drove the 2.0-litre TDI S tronic which had the silky smooth and oh so responsive 7-speed box and also the addition of quattro. What a total delight on a lengthy road trip covering practically all types of roads including a relaxing cruise along the M6 without any delays! And helped by superb driving comfort and handling. There's also so little interior or exterior noise.

A6 Avant 2.0TDI quattro 190PS Black Edition S tronic, £43,245 on-the-road.

The first batch at Bristol docks

Outlander PHEV arrives in the UK

In preparation for the launch of the new 2019 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV, which went on sale in the UK this week, the first shipment of vehicles has arrived in the UK at Bristol's Royal Portbury Docks, with more shipments set to dock in the following weeks.

This first batch of 400 vehicles will enable Mitsubishi Motors in the UK to meet a surge in demand for the UK's most popular plug-in vehicle, and will be closely followed by nearly 2,000 vehicles in the coming weeks. The new 2019 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV has been engineered to meet the latest emissions regulations and comfortably qualifies for the government plug-in car grant thanks to its WLTP emissions of 46g/km and EV range of 28 miles, while also attracting the lowest possible BIK rate of 13 per cent.

These impressive figures are a direct result of the extensive revisions the car has received for 2019. A new 2.4-litre Atkinson-cycle petrol engine produces 135hp (up from 121hp) across a wider rev range. The rear electric motor output increases to 95hp and the drive battery benefits from a 10% increase in output, the overall capacity is increased to 13.8kWh thanks to new battery cells, all of this results in WLTP combined fuel economy of 139mpg.

To complement the drivetrain enhancements, a number of other changes ensure the Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV is even more pleasurable to drive.

The new Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV is also quieter and more refined, with more comfort and supportive front seats, new switchgear, a revised instrument cluster, the addition of rear ventilation vents, and more convenient USB ports.

In terms of exterior style, there's a new front end with a redesigned grille with honeycomb mesh, new bumper extension and new headlamp design with LED hi-beams.

Efficient nine-speed auto diesel for Civic

The refined and economical Honda Civic 1.6-litre i-DTEC diesel model is now available with an efficient nine-speed automatic transmission, capable of delivering impressive shifting refinement and official average fuel economy of 68.9 mpg – for all grades and across both four-door sedan and five-door hatchback models.

This is the first time that a combination of a diesel engine and an automatic gearbox has been available on a Civic.

With a wide spread of gears, the nine-speed transmission boasts superb efficiency: the very low first-gear ratio delivers a smooth and powerful launch, while a high top-gear ratio ensures low engine speed while cruising, which reduces fuel consumption and noise.

The 1.6-litre i-DTEC automatic offers both exhilarating driving performance combined with efficiency, with competitive power-to-consumption ratios among automatic models in the same class.

The engine produces 120 PS (88 kW) at 4,000 rpm and 300 Nm of torque at 2,000 rpm. Combined with the nine-speed automatic gearbox, it can power the Civic from zero to 62 mph in 11 seconds, and on to a top speed of 124 mph.

Emissions

As well as impressive economy, under the combined cycle of the revised NEDC test, the new Civic 1.6-litre i-DTEC Automatic has recorded low CO2 emissions of 108g/km (four-door) and 109g/km (five-door).

The spread of ratios in the gearbox means the automatic delivers smooth shifts, and a feeling of linear acceleration through the gears. Depending on the engine speed and throttle application, the transmission is also capable of 'skipping' gears for quick response, for example shifting down directly from 9th to 5th gear or from 7th to 4th gear, in addition to one- and two-gear downshifts.

Honda's latest 1.6-litre i-DTEC engine features forged steel pistons for reducing cooling loss and 'super plateau honing', which lowers the friction level between the pistons and the cylinder bores to enable smooth piston movement and enhance the long-term wear characteristics of the engine.

A revised turbocharger features a highly efficient variable-nozzle design and its rotational speed is precisely controlled by the car's electronics, minimising turbo lag and providing an optimal combination of low to mid-range pull and high-speed performance. Energy loss from the system is lower than in the previous i-DTEC, thanks to a new design of compressor in the turbocharger. All of these upgrades contribute to an improvement in fuel consumption compared to the previous generation i-DTEC unit.

Honda's new i-DTEC offers an exciting driving experience with efficiency

The engine is one of the first engines to be officially tested through the Real Driving Emission procedure to validate NOx and particulate emission levels. The powertrain has a new NOx Storage Converter system with a higher processing cell density, which enables faster conversion and a reduction in emissions. A silver thin-coated particulate filter further improves the combustion efficiency of particulate matter, extending exhaust component durability, due to shorter heat production in the particular filter.

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, August 2, 2018

A sensible car that's worth a look at

By James Parker

Vauxhall. Estate. Diesel. Not exactly words that get the heartstrings twanging, are they?

Yet those in the market for a truly sensible car – rather than an exciting or interesting one – would do well to consider them. This is the Vauxhall Astra Sports Tourer – or estate, if you look past the marketing gobbledegook. It's based on the latest Mk7 Astra, giving it a good starting point to work from, and offers a range of efficient engines alongside a usefully practical body.

The Astra is one of the most popular car models in the UK's motoring history, so there's very little that won't feel instantly familiar to most buyers. Despite this, there's actually a lot that's changed over the previous-generation model, which this car replaced back in 2015.

The Astra is 200kg lighter than the model it replaces, and crucially for tech-savvy modern buyers the dashboard is far simpler and more high-tech.

In the transition from hatch to estate, very little has changed – there's just that extra bodywork above the rear axle, along with a chrome styling line to mark this out as the Sports Tourer model.

There are a few petrol engines on offer, but provided you do enough miles we'd recommend the diesel engine that came with our test car. It's Vauxhall's own 1.6-litre 'Whisper' diesel, and it's ideally matched to the Astra – smooth, powerful enough and remarkably refined – a brief burble when setting off soon settles down. It's capable of 0-60mph in 9.3 seconds – not exactly speedy, but with a decent slug of mid-range torque you won't struggle to keep up with traffic.

The dashboard is easy to navigate

It's also very efficient, returning nearly 60mpg during our time with the car.

On the petrol front, there's a 1.0-litre three-cylinder that's probably best avoided if you're planning on using the car's ample carrying capacity, a brace of 1.4-litre turbos and a 1.6-litre with 197bhp.

Given that this is an inherently sensible diesel estate car, you might be expecting it to be a bit rubbish to drive. But that's not the case at all.

The Astra is particularly well-balanced, remaining taut enough to resist body roll while staying comfortable over most surfaces. This car is a top-drawer motorway cruiser, with a relaxed sixth gear gait and decent refinement.

There's a firm edge to the ride around town, however, and the steering is a little over-light. It's this latter point that prevents the Astra from being really entertaining despite good grip in the corners.

Vauxhall doesn't offer a sporting model of the Astra like it does with the Insignia, so if you crave something with more panache you'll need to opt for a rival.

There's more than a passing resemblance to the larger Insignia Sports Tourer, which is no bad thing – it's a handsome

There's more than a passing resemblance to the larger Insignia Sports Tourer, which is no bad thing – it's a handsome car. The Astra's proportions are slightly less easy on the eye, with the stubby estate boot a fair bit less graceful than its bigger sibling. It also misses out on the latest Vauxhall corporate grille, instead opting for a double-bar arrangement that looks a little fussy.

A chrome line down the car's windowline draws attention to the extra bodywork of the estate, while the tailgate is plain and inoffensive. Altogether, the Astra package is one which seems to be designed to be as undivisive as possible – it will blend in instantly in any company car park.

There's plenty of space for passengers with capacious rear seats. As for the dashboard design and styling, it's once again plain and inoffensive – though in this case, that's ideal as it means everything is exactly where you expect to find it.

The Astra gets a bad rap for being 'just another Vauxhall' but it honestly deserves more than that.

It's a good-to-drive and reasonably practical, with some of the best diesel engines available in this class.

Sure, it's not exciting – but not a lot in this class is, and the Astra's ubiquity and popularity mean it should be pretty dependable. If you're looking at a Golf or Focus Estate, think carefully about test-driving an Astra, too.

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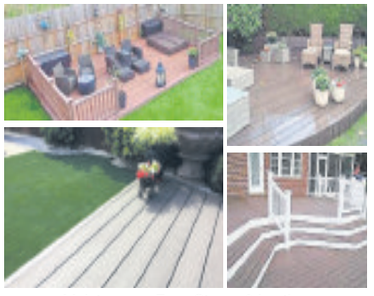

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what's on

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Markets

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3 Home & Services

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DFS approved and we take the stress away.
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4 Pets & Animals

Equestrian Corner

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Guns & Dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

Pets Corner

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Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
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2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
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5 Business & Farming

Business Opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering into any obligations.

6 Property

Accommodation To Let

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

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8 Motoring

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01785 211090.

MAZDA MX5
07 plate
new MoT,
full Mazda service history.
59K miles,
lovely metallic blue,
£3,950 ono.
07855 370328.

MAZDA MX5
07 plate
new MoT,
full Mazda service history.
59K miles,
lovely metallic blue,
£3,950 ono.
07855 370328.

MUST BE SEEN

MERCEDES ELEGANCE A150
2006.
Family owned from new.
Full Service History.
MoT. Only 10,200 miles.
Mint condition.
First to see will buy.
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PEUGEOT 407 1.6 HDi ST SALOON
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12 months MoT.
Immaculate.
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Second lady driver.
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E/W. Air Con. CD player.
Alloy wheels.
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silver, cambelt done.
Lovely car
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07453 046600.

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£1,200 ono
07773 681375.

VAUXHALL ASTRA CLUB 1.6
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£695
07939 498854.

RARE CAR

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1.8 Engine, P Reg., green colour, alloys, CD, radio, two new tyres, 77,000 miles.
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07453 156785.

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3 door hatchback.
2004. Red. Petrol. Manual.
MoT May 19.
119,000 miles.
Good condition.
Great first car.
£845 ono.
07871 521216/01562 911634.

Motorbikes

KAWASAKI Z250
2016, 4,800 miles,
excellent condition.
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Cat D.
07906 475906.

YAMAHA VIRAGO XV750
1995, red/black, 13,322 miles.
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9 Local Information

Public Notices

PUBLIC & LEGAL NOTICES
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(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

10 Personals

General

BURIAL PLOT for 2 Interments, Bushbury Cemetery, good site, near Church. Cost new £2,012, sell £1,800 ono. 07791 621118.

Personal

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Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton,
WV1 1ES.

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 DIVERSION OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC MEDDINS LANE, KINVER

Notice is hereby given that Staffordshire County Council on 2 August 2018 made an Order the effect of which is to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding along Meddins Lane, Kinver from its junction with Compton Road to a point outside property number 96. For more information regarding access arrangements, timings and diversion routes please visit https://roadworks.org?tm=106120175. The Order will come into operation on 6 August 2018 and the said works will commence on or as near as practicable to that date taking place daily between the hours of 07:30 to 18:00. It is anticipated the works will be completed by 17 August 2018. The Order will remain in force for a period of 18 months or until the footway resurfacing works undertaken by Amey on behalf of Staffordshire County Council, which it is proposed to carry out on or near the road have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

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Advert example only.
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OT, 56K, dealer serviced, sat
av, fsh, leather interior, in car
) system, excellent condition,
(Advert example only)
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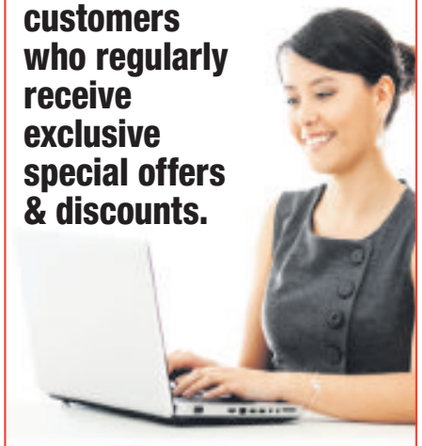
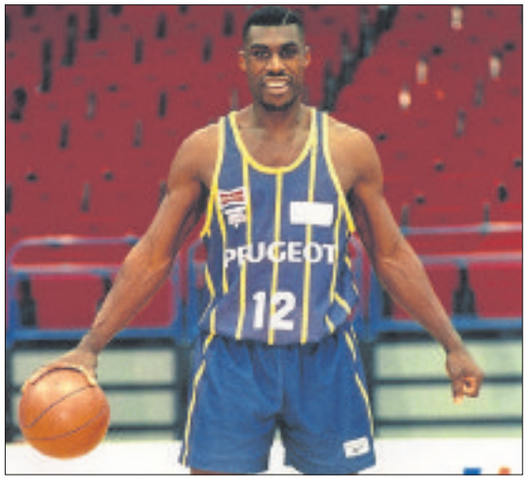


ClassifiedAds

Allen spends his time coaching the sport he loves

Allen with daughter, Dominique, who is a Great Britain and England international

Allen challenges for the ball



Always popular with the fans

Ace Allen has lived his life through basketball

PLAYING in front of 5,000 fans, winning two British Basketball League play-off titles and earning five England caps for good measure.

For someone who didn't start playing basketball until his teenage years – because he was embarrassed about his height – Clive Allen enjoyed a truly stellar career.

Growing up in the West Midlands, Allen began his sporting life playing football and trying to blend in with his classmates. But his talent would eventually help him win a scholarship in America, leading to a 15-year career with the Birmingham Bullets when the sport was really rocking in the region.

"When I was at school I hated being tall and I didn't want to be involved in anything that showed that," said Allen. "At Hillcrest School, in Netherton, there weren't too many black people and I didn't want to stand out any more, so I didn't start playing basketball until I left.

"Mike Landell, who was a Great Britain basketball player from Dudley, was the person who got me into the sport. He encouraged me to go for my first trial when I was about 16 to 17.

Redundant

"But Dave Fisher, who was the coach at the time, said I wasn't good enough for the senior squad and I was also too old for the under-17s. I was told to come back in about a year."

Allen is now head coach at West Bromwich Albion Basketball Academy, which comes under the Sporting Albion umbrella and is directly linked with the football team. The 56-year-old has eaten, lived and breathed basketball since deciding to take the sport seriously and has come a long way from working in a factory.

"I was working at Grazebrookes Foundries in Dudley, but was made redundant," he said. "I started getting back into sport again and it was while playing football at the Aston Villa Leisure Centre I was asked by someone to switch sports. I started playing in the Sandwell Central League for Sandwell Basketball Club.

"I was playing in the Central League when the coach from Bullets saw me and took me down for another trial – and then offered me a contract. The first season I probably played, what felt like, five minutes, but every time I came on the crowd loved it because of the effort and hustle I put in."

SPORTING FEATURE

By James Driver-Fisher

"It was while playing football at the Aston Villa Leisure Centre I was asked by someone to switch sports"

Allen's efforts eventually saw him land a scholarship to play at Northwest Nazarene University, in Idaho, which was a Christian College. He also studied to become a social worker. But his American adventure was cut short after his wife fell pregnant with his daughter, Dominique, who herself is now a Great Britain and England international.

"My wife wanted our baby to be born in the UK so we came back from US a little early," said Allen, who played most of his career as a power forward or at centre.

"I started playing for the Bullets again and playing in America was such a learning curve and it had transformed my game. At the time, in BBL, a lot of British players sat on the bench because it was taken over by Americans, like Premiership football today really.

"But we had a really strong team in the 90s, with Nigel Lloyd, Fab Flournoy, Tony Dorsey, Tony Simms and Reggie Kirk. But one of the main things was we always had a really good relationship with each other and also the fans."

Allen – who enjoyed two stints with the Bullets, from 1985-87 and then 1988-2001 – first won the BBL play-off finals in 1995/96, but said the second title in 1997/98, also at Wembley Arena, was the pinnacle of his playing career.

"A year later, however, the squad was left with just five senior players. But the lack of resources once again made the team a stronger unit. Winning the finals in 1998 was my greatest moment but a few years later, when it didn't work out with some of the American players, it just left of five of us. That was Lloyd, Kirk, Simms, Flourney and myself. The Bullets also eventually went full circle because when Australian Harry Wrublewski took over he wanted to take the game from leisure centres and into arenas."

Allen's career was eventually ended due to a condition called neurosarcoidosis, which affected his spine. But once his playing days were over he was able to refocus and become one of the Black Country's most prominent coaches.

After enjoying one last hurrah with the Black Country Bears, winning the title after dropping down a division, he briefly joined Simms as coach at the Aston Athletics basketball team in 2005.

He became assistant coach at the Milton Keynes Lions under Lloyd, then general manager for the Birmingham Panthers, again under Lloyd, during their only season, from 2007/08. But a conversation with Jamie Bunch, sporting director of the Albion Foundation in 2009, that really shaped his coaching career.

Contact

"I dropped down a division and played for the Black Country Bears – and won a title – but I had been coaching all the way through and launched my own Big Sky Basketball academy.

"I worked with more than 70 schools in one year covering Dudley, Stourbridge and Halesowen.

"Jamie Bunch then got in contact and wanted to follow the Sporting Lisbon way, where there were other teams affiliated with the club. I used to run basketball sessions at Sir Gilbert Claughton, which would end with a big tournament but they wanted to set up a team and take it more seriously.

"I wanted to push it too and through my connections at the Bullets I met Jamie.

"We only had two teams when we started at under-16 and under-18. Now we have 12, which goes from under-14s up to the men's, which are now linked with Wolverhampton University.

"I also coach at Dudley College and Sandwell College too, so there is a bigger network for basketball players."

Bilbao bound Gavin's hometown warm-up

FRANKIE Gavin warms up for his European Welterweight Title fight later this year with a six round contest in his home city in September.

The 32-year-old Birmingham boxer takes on Kerman Lejarraga in the Spaniard's back yard of Bilbao on November 17. But as Gavin, the former Commonwealth and British Champion, steps up camp, he will take part in a warm-up bout at the Holiday Inn, Smallbrook Queensway, on September 16. Gavin said: "Camp is well under way and I'm determined. Lejarraga is my main focus but it's important to get back in the ring, blow off a few cobwebs and make a statement. November will soon come round and I'm going to Bilbao to bring the European Title home."

The four-fight dinner show, 'Bilbao Bound' will also feature Gavin's stablemate Brad 'Bosh' Thomas, Central Area Heavyweight Champion, Kash Ali, and Walsall super welterweight, Levi Ferguson.

Tickets are £65 to include a two-course Sunday lunch or £35 standard unreserved. Call 07900 741 617

Davis takes on role of managing misfits

WOLVES have hired ex-Crewe boss Steve Davis to manage their fringe players as they look to find them deals away from the club.

Dominic Iorfa, Jordan Graham, Phil Ofosu-Ayeh, Michal Zyro and Ethan Ebanks-Landell are training separately from the first team in a 'group three' section at Compton Park.

Wolves are working to, ideally, find permanent moves for the players. Loan moves look the more likely scenarios for most of the group, which also contains Paul Gladon, Joe Mason, Connor Ronan and Sylvain Deslandes as well as some of the older under-23 players.

Boyhood Wolves fan Davis came close to landing the top job at Molineux back in 2013 when he was interviewed for the then-vacant head coach role after Dean Saunders was sacked. Davis was at one point odds-on favourite to get the job but missed out to Kenny Jackett.

It's understood that he is working full-time at Compton Park overseeing the group having been handed a temporary contract.

New boss kicks off Casuals campaign

WOLVERHAMPTON Casuals boss Dean Gill hopes to hit the ground running when the West Midlands League season kicks off.

Gill made the switch from Wednesfield at the end of the last campaign and the first batch of Premier Division fixtures have handed his new charges an opening-day clash at home to Wellington. After a trip to Wem, a visit to Tividale and a home clash with his former charges follow.

Gill said: "We are pleased with the opening set of fixtures. We start with a home game which is always good and hopefully we can get a good start. If we can get a decent start I would like to see us challenging in the top six."

Last season's Premier Division runners-up Tividale kick-off at Smethwick Rangers and, as well as the clash with Casuals, meet Black Country Rangers in the opening month.Tivi boss Dave King said: "It's a tough opening month, there is no doubt about that."

Black Country Rangers, fourth last season, start at Bilston Town Community.

Sport

I've lived my life through basketball

Page 31

HALESOWEN TOWN

Aug 11	**Lowestoft Tn**	**H**
Aug 14	Banbury Utd	A
Aug 18	Kettering Tn	A
Aug 25	**Biggleswade Tn**	**H**
Aug 28	Stourbridge	A
Sep 1	**St Neots Tn**	**H**
Sep 15	**King's Lynn Tn**	**H**
Sep 29	Bedworth Utd	A
Oct 6	**Rushall Olympic**	**H**
Oct 13	Leiston	A
Oct 16	Coalville Tn	A
Oct 20	**Needham Mkt**	**H**
Nov 3	Royston Tn	A
Nov 10	**Alvechurch**	**H**
Nov 17	St Ives Tn	A
Nov 20	**Barwell**	**H**
Nov 24	Rushden & Diamonds	A
Dec 1	**Stratford Tn**	**H**
Dec 8	**Tamworth**	**H**
Dec 15	Hitchin Tn	A
Dec 22	Lowestoft Tn	A
Dec 26	**Stourbridge**	**H**
Dec 29	**Banbury Utd**	**H**
Jan 1	Redditch Utd	A
Jan 5	**Coalville Tn**	**H**
Jan 12	Alvechurch	A
Jan 19	**St Ives Tn**	**H**
Jan 26	Barwell	A
Feb 2	**Royston Tn**	**H**
Feb 9	Needham Mkt	A
Feb 16	Stratford Tn	A
Feb 23	**Rushden & Diamonds**	**H**
Mar 2	Tamworth	A
Mar 9	**Hitchin Tn**	**H**
Mar 16	Rushall Olympic	A
Mar 23	**Leiston**	**H**
Mar 30	King's Lynn Tn	A
Apr 6	**Bedworth Utd**	**H**
Apr 13	**Kettering Tn**	**H**
Apr 20	Biggleswade Tn	A
Apr 22	**Redditch Utd**	**H**
Apr 27	St Neots Tn	A

STOURBRIDGE

Aug 11	Barwell	A
Aug 13	**Stratford Tn**	**H**
Aug 18	**Rushden & Diamonds**	**H**
Aug 25	Alvechurch	A
Aug 28	**Halesowen Tn**	**H**
Sep 1	King's Lynn Tn	A
Sep 15	St Ives Tn	A
Sep 29	**Needham Mkt**	**H**
Oct 6	Redditch Utd	A
Oct 13	**Royston Tn**	**H**
Oct 15	**Bedworth Utd**	**H**
Oct 20	Biggleswade Tn	A
Nov 3	**Lowestoft Tn**	**H**
Nov 10	Banbury Utd	A
Nov 17	**Hitchin Tn**	**H**
Nov 20	Kettering Tn	A
Nov 24	**Tamworth**	**H**
Dec 1	St Neots Tn	A
Dec 8	Leiston	A
Dec 15	**Coalville Tn**	**H**
Dec 22	**Barwell**	**H**
Dec 26	Halesowen Tn	A
Dec 29	Stratford Tn	A
Jan 1	**Rushall Olympic**	**H**
Jan 5	Bedworth Utd	A
Jan 12	**Banbury Utd**	**H**
Jan 19	Hitchin Tn	A
Jan 26	**Kettering Tn**	**H**
Feb 2	Lowestoft Tn	A
Feb 9	**Biggleswade Tn**	**H**
Feb 16	**St Neots Tn**	**H**
Feb 23	Tamworth	A
Mar 2	**Leiston**	**H**
Mar 9	Coalville Tn	A
Mar 16	**Redditch Utd**	**H**
Mar 23	Royston Tn	A
Mar 30	**St Ives Tn**	**H**
Apr 6	Needham Mkt	A
Apr 13	Rushden & Diamonds	A
Apr 20	**Alvechurch**	**H**
Apr 22	Rushall Olympic	A
Apr 27	**King's Lynn Tn**	**H**

Kirstie gloves up for pro boxing career

Kirstie Bavington with Mayor Councillor Alan Taylor

A PE teacher and former footballer from Dudley is proving a knockout after donning gloves to become a professional boxer.

Kirstie Bavington, who works during the day at Castle High School, met the Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Alan Taylor, to reveal her dreams of working her way to the top and inspiring others along the way.

The 25-year-old welterweight has had two pro fights so far and remains unbeaten. She drew a hard-fought debut bout with Bulgarian veteran Borislava Goranova at Villa Park in May before beating Elaine Greenan on points at The Venue in Dudley last month.

Kirstie's first love was football, breaking into Brierley Hill Bullets boys team at the age of seven before going on to play for women's teams at Wolves, West Bromwich Albion, Birmingham City, Coventry City, Crystal Palace and AFC Wimbledon.

But she has hung up her boots to focus on boxing, with a third bout planned for September.

VILLAGE CLUB WIN AN OSCA

HIGH-ACHIEVING village cricket side Enville were at the forefront of this year's Natwest Outstanding Service to Cricket Awards.

Two unsung heroes of Worcestershire cricket, Peter Radburn and Alan Green, also took centre stage at New Road for annual awards which recognise volunteers across the county who devote countless hours to the game.

Radburn and Green shared top billing as they walked away with two OSCAs.

Kidderminster vice-chairman and Worcestershire County League chairman Radburn scooped the Bill Jones Memorial Volunteer of the Year award for his magnificent work for over 50 years, as a player then as an administrator. Radburn, the driving force behind the creation of Worcestershire County League, now in its 20th year, also triumphed in the Lifetime Achiever category.

Contribution

Green, who is vice-chairman, groundsman and head of youth coaching at Beacon, claimed the Outstanding Contribution Award and also the new Tigger Award, established in the memory of former Wombourne player and youth coach Andy Handley, for this commitment to North Worcestershire Cricket.

Enville's long-serving Paul Grainger was a joint winner with Green in the Outstanding Contribution category with his years of service deservedly honoured.

Enville's achievement of being crowned National Indoor champions at Lord's was recognised with a special award along with one to retiring WCBL Indoor League organiser John Iggulden.

Kidderminster's junior section secretary Ian Davenport won an OSCA for his contribution to the club's NatWest CricketForce weekend.

Penn Cricket Club stalwart Brian Lester was another winner, after claiming a gong in the League category.

Medal success for TKD teens

Instructor and TKD World Master Vince Farquharson, centre, with Lauren Pope and Tore Lamont

AMATEUR squad Dudley Tae Kwon-Do came home with three medals from the Tae Kwon-Do International World Championships at Arena Birmingham.

More than 2,000 competitors from 22 took part in the two-day event.

Dudley's 18-year-old Lauren Pope returned to the club with a silver medal in the Middleweight Women's Green Belt category. While 18-year-old Tore Lamont returned with a bronze medal in the Blue Belt Patterns and, after four tough fights, a bronze in the Middleweight Men's Blue Belt category.

Instructor of Dudley Tae Kwon-Do, and head instructor of West Midlands Tae Kwon-Do, World Master Vince Farquharson said "I am over the moon to see two young fighters coming home with some medals."

Glassboys too clinical for Sutton

Sutton Coldfield 0 Stourbridge 4

THE Glassboys enjoyed their fourth pre-season victory in eight days.

The Stourbridge back-line had a makeshift look about it because of injury and unavailability with Aaron Forde and Brad Birch filling the full-back berths. Jake Evans was handed another opportunity in the centre of midfield, while a trialist featured again after getting on the scoresheet at Bewdley two days earlier.

Gary Hackett's men proved to be more clinical in front of goal than the hosts. The final scoreline was harsh on the home side, who were denied on more than one occasion by Raajan Gill in the Stour goal.

With 21 minutes gone Leon Broadhurst put the Glassboys ahead. A precise through-ball from Evans played in Broadhurst and he was allowed the time to drill home a left-foot shot.

At the other end Anderson was thwarted by a tip-over save by the keeper and then from a right-wing cross from Mills, Duggan got in a far post header that clipped the bar.

In the 56th minute Thompson-Brown doubled the lead with a 20-yard free-kick that flashed past the keeper.

After 69 minutes Stourbridge added a third when Thompson-Brown's low cross was inadvertently turned into his own net by the Sutton no 6.

Three minutes later Mills got his name on the scoresheet coolly burying the ball away to make it 4-0.

Matches abandoned as rain hits cricket

A WINNING draw for Stratford-upon-Avon leaves them six points behind leaders Stourbridge in Division Three after the Amblecote side's match at Redditch was abandoned in the 31st over with the visitors on 140-3. Marvarick Perry had reached an unbeaten 54 when the players left the field.

Halesowen's Birmingham League Division One clash was hit by the weather. Kidderminster had a total of 205-8, in 55 overs.

Halesowen's reply was reduced to 42 overs and they had reached 64-4, in the 17th over, when the match was abandoned.

★★★

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